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The Truth Speaks

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IBC WORLD NEWS
CH ABC
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Rubio Calls Ongoing Ukraine Peace Efforts Delicate And Complex P8

FM on LIC's independent investment decisions P9

P12 Kohli's Future 'Not a Question', Says Kotak after India Win

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Lok Sabha adjourned amid Opposition protests on SIR

Winter session sees protests over SIR; key bill cleared amid uproar

NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha proceedings were adjourned on Monday, the first day of the Winter Session, as opposition parties staged protests demanding a discussion on the controversial Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. The opposition highlighted concerns over rising workloads on booth level officers (BLOs), citing multiple suicides allegedly linked to SIR duties.

The House experienced two earlier adjournments during the Question Hour in the morning and again in the afternoon before being adjourned for the day at around 2.20 PM. Several opposition members entered the Well, shouting slogans and pressing for a debate on the SIR exercise initiated by the Election Commission.

Despite the disruption, Parliament managed to pass a bill amending the Goods and Services Tax (GST) law for Manipur. Introduced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, the legislation replaces a presidential ordinance and empowers Parliament to enact the law while the state remains under President's Rule.

During the 12-minute Zero Hour, Sitharaman introduced three additional bills and tabled supplementary demands for grants for the 2025-26 fiscal year. Among them were the Central Excise (Amendment) Bill, 2025, aimed at levying excise duty on tobacco products, and the Health Security and National Security Cess Bill, 2025, which imposes a new cess on pan masala manufacturing.

The passage of the Manipur GST Bill, despite the chaos in the House, underscores Parliament's ability to push through essential legislation even amid intense political contention. The first day of the Winter Session reflected both the opposition's insistence on accountability regarding SIR and the government's determination to advance its legislative agenda.

Parliament Winter Session

RS Chairman urges members to follow parliamentary discourse

Rajya Sabha Chairman C.P. Radhakrishnan, in his maiden speech, urged members to respect the Constitution, adhere to rules, and observe the 'Lakshman Rekha' of parliamentary conduct, ensuring individual rights are protected while maintaining decorum and responsibilities within established norms of the Upper House.

Kharge's mention of Dhankhar's exit sparks protest

While congratulating newly elected RS Chairman CP Radhakrishnan, Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge sparked protests from treasury benches after he recalled former Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar's "unexpected and sudden exit" from office and noted that the House did not get a chance to bid him farewell.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju criticised the remark, calling it inappropriate for the "solemn occasion." "Why did the honourable Leader of Opposition refer to a case which was not necessary to be raised at this moment..." Rijiju said. Welcoming the Chairman on behalf of the Opposition parties, Kharge said the Congress "staunchly stands by Constitutional values and time-honoured Parliamentary traditions... be assured of our cooperation in the conduct of proceedings."

More on page 6

Rijiju assures govt is open to discussion on SIR

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju informed the Rajya Sabha that the government is "open to discussing any issue," and the Opposition's demand is currently under consideration. He clarified that it has "not been rejected" and a response will be provided "soon," referring to his earlier remarks at the Business Advisory Committee that he would reply by Sunday 9 pm. Rijiju requested patience, saying, "There are other matters on the agenda that can be addressed in the meantime. Don't assume the government is unwilling to discuss any issue...Please don't impose timelines." Trinamool Congress floor leader Derek O'Brien shot back saying "Problem is not the timeline but trust deficit."

CM Siddaramaiah invited to DCM's residence today

BENGALURU

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has been formally invited for breakfast at Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar's residence today, the latter's office had confirmed on Monday. The invite follows a previous breakfast meeting at Siddaramaiah's home, aimed at quelling a brewing leadership tussle within the state Congress.

Addressing the media, Siddaramaiah said he had been told to come but had not received a formal call yet. "Maybe they might call. If I am called, I will go," he stated, hinting at cautious optimism ahead of the meeting.

The two leaders have publicly assured unity, following directions from the Congress high command. "From now, there won't be any confusion," Siddaramaiah had said, emphasizing that both he and Shivakumar would adhere to the party leadership's guidance.

Observers see the upcoming breakfast as another step toward reinforcing truce and coordination between the state's top Congress leaders. The gesture is expected to ease tensions and send a message of consolidated leadership ahead of crucial political developments in Karnataka.

The high command's intervention underscores its intent to pause internal disputes while maintaining party stability in the state. Both leaders' engagement signals a move toward collaboration and reaffirmation of party discipline.

'CM and I work like brothers': DCM reiterates unity

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar once again stressed party unity, insisting that he and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah function "like brothers" and that there are no factions within the Congress. Speaking to the media after offering floral tributes to Kengal Hanumanthaiah on his birth anniversary at Vidhana Soudha, Shivakumar addressed the growing speculation around internal divisions and the recent breakfast meeting.

Shivakumar said the meeting was purely a matter between him and the Chief Minister, adding that attempts to portray them as leaders of rival camps were baseless. "There are no groups in our party. We are born alone and we die alone — so why would we need factions? You in the media keep showing Siddaramaiah's group and DKShi's group. But we do not believe in any such divisions," he clarified.

'7 to 8 leaders competing to be CM'

BJP state president B.Y. Vijayendra said that the race for the chief minister's post within the ruling Congress has intensified, with seven to eight senior MLAs and ministers reportedly vying for the position. Speaking to the media, he criticised the ongoing power struggle, claiming it has weakened the administration. Vijayendra alleged that since the Siddaramaiah government came to power, it has shown negligence toward farmers.

"Seven to eight senior legislators and ministers in the ruling party are competing to somehow become the CM".

—B.Y. Vijayendra, State BJP president

CM HONORS HANUMANTHAIAH

CM Siddaramaiah pays tribute to former CM Kengal Hanumanthaiah on his death anniversary at Vidhana Soudha premises in Bengaluru on Monday. ➤ CH PHOTO

Delhi court sends Al Falah University Founder to 14 day JC

NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Monday, December 1, 2025, sent Al Falah University founder Jawad Ahmed Siddiqui to 14-day judicial custody in connection with a terror-linked money laundering case linked to the November 10 Red Fort blast. Siddiqui, who had earlier spent 13 days in Enforcement Directorate (ED) custody from November 19, was produced before Additional Sessions Judge Sheetal Chaudhary Pradhan and remanded until December 15.

During the hearing, Siddiqui's counsel requested access to prescribed medication and spectacles, which the court allowed. ED officials submitted his medical prescriptions, directing jail authorities to ensure he continues treatment.

The ED has alleged that Siddiqui and Al Falah University misrepresented UGC recognition and NAAC accreditation, diverted student fees and public funds for personal use, and amassed assets disproportionate to declared finances. Searches across 19 Delhi-NCR locations yielded approximately ₹48 lakh in cash. Investigations into the university are ongoing as part of the Red Fort blast probe, which claimed 15 lives.

Govt confirms spoofing across major airports

NEW DELHI

Flights near Delhi and several other major Indian airports have experienced GPS spoofing and GNSS interference over the past year, the government confirmed in Parliament on Monday. Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu disclosed the information in a written reply to the Rajya Sabha, detailing the scope of incidents and ongoing mitigation measures. The minister said that following a November 2023 directive by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) mandating reporting of GPS jamming or spoofing events, "regular reports are being received from major airports including Kolkata, Amritsar, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, and Chennai."

PRAJWAL APPEALS FOR BAIL, LAWYER QUESTIONS EVIDENCE

BENGALURU

Former MP Prajwal Revanna, sentenced to life imprisonment in a rape case involving a domestic worker, has approached the Karnataka High Court challenging the verdict and seeking bail. The case was heard on December 1, 2025, before a division bench comprising Justices K.S. Mudgal and T. Venkatesh Naik. Senior advocate Siddharth Luthra, representing Prajwal, presented strong arguments, highlighting inconsistencies and raising doubts over the evidence, urging the court to grant bail.

Luthra questioned why no complaint was filed by the victim for three years despite alleged incidents in 2019 and 2021, and why multiple criminal cases were suddenly registered. He also challenged the prosecution's claims regarding Prajwal's mobile phone, arguing that no proper notice under Section 91 was issued, and no attempt was made to obtain information from the mobile company using the IMEI number.

Additionally, Luthra raised doubts over the FSL (Forensic Science Laboratory) evidence, suggesting possible political motives in filing the case and inconsistencies in the handling of the victim's clothes and DNA samples. He contended that some key officials involved in collecting evidence had passed away, questioning the admissibility and reliability of the forensic findings.

The High Court, after hearing these arguments, adjourned the proceedings to Wednesday, leaving the public and legal observers eager to see how the arguments and counterarguments will unfold.

120 militants are waiting to infiltrate Kashmir: BSF IG

"Our G unit is keeping a close watch on all the 69 active Launching Pads along the LoC, where around 100-120 terrorists have been waiting to infiltrate. Various training camps of terrorists are also under scrutiny of our intelligence wing."

—Ashok Yadav, BSF Kashmir Frontier IG

SRINAGAR

BSF Kashmir Frontier IG Ashok Yadav on Monday revealed that there are 69 active militant launching pads along the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir, with 100-120 terrorists waiting to infiltrate. He stated that in close coordination with the Army, the BSF has successfully dominated the LoC, preventing four infiltration attempts this year and eliminating eight militants.

The BSF has conducted 22 joint operations with the Army, J&K Police, and CRPF, neutralizing terrorists in North Kashmir and recovering arms including AK-47s, MP-5s, pistols, grenades, and ammunition. Despite harsh terrain, extreme weather, and ongoing threats like sniping, BAT actions, and ceasefire violations, BSF personnel continue to secure 343 km of the LoC with dedication.

Yadav highlighted the role of the G Branch intelligence unit in monitoring the 69 launch pads and terrorist training camps. Following the April 22 Pahalgam attack, specialized CI/CT teams were deployed in Gulmarg to ensure tourist safety.

QUICK READ

'Ministry does not advice LIC on investments'

NEW DELHI: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman told Parliament on Monday that the Finance Ministry does not issue any advice or instructions to the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) regarding how it should invest its funds. She emphasised that LIC's investments made in Adani Group were as per established SOPs. *More on page 9*

HK arrests more suspects in fire probe

HONG KONG: Hong Kong authorities have arrested 13 more people for suspected manslaughter as the death toll from the city's worst fire in decades rose to 151. Police continue to search the seven devastated residential towers at Wang Fuk Court, where bodies have been found in stairwells and on rooftops.

KARNATAKA TIGER CENSUS

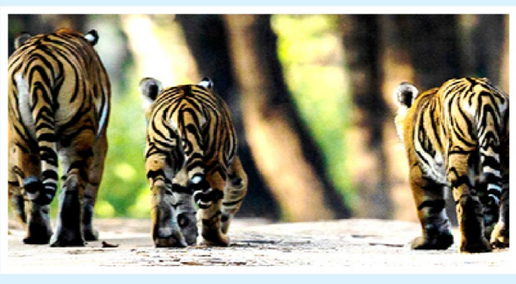
Karnataka to commence tiger census in January 2026

BENGALURU

Karnataka forest officials are gearing up for the all-India tiger census, scheduled to begin in January 2026. Training for staff in the Bengaluru Circle has been completed, and the central government aims to release the nationwide report by April 2026.

The census will follow a three-phase methodology: Phase 1 will collect data on carnivore and prey base density, Phase 2 will compile field reports, and Phase 3 will analyse camera trap images. The exercise will first cover Project Tiger areas before extending to other forest patches. Karnataka's tiger population has fluctuated over recent years: from 403 in 2020, rising to 417 in 2022, dipping to 408 in 2023, and 393 in 2024. The state ranks second nationally with 563 tigers in the last all-India assessment. Officials highlight rising human-wildlife conflicts and the need for relocation to new habitats.

This synchronized estimation aims to provide updated data for conservation planning and conflict management.



- Phase 1: Carnivore & prey density
- Phase 2: Field reports
- Phase 3: Camera trap data
- Tiger Population Trend (Karnataka):

2020: 403	2022: 417
2023: 408	2024: 393

QUICK READ

Bengaluru commuters face daily traffic nightmare

Bengaluru

Bengaluru's traffic chaos is testing residents' patience daily. Rajeev Rai, stuck near Raj Samadhi Road for over an hour, worried about missing his flight. Frustrated, he posted on X, tagging Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, calling traffic management poorly staffed and unresponsive. Many commuters report long delays, accidents, and stress, blaming rapid city growth and weak road planning. Experts urge modern traffic systems and stricter enforcement. Rai plans to meet Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar in Delhi to discuss solutions. Residents hope such steps bring smoother travel, better safety, and less daily frustration on Bengaluru's busy roads.

Four-year-old girl survives car horror accident

Bengaluru

In a terrifying incident in Bengaluru's Weavers' Colony, a four-year-old girl survived after a speeding car ran over her outside her home on November 28. CCTV footage showed the child stepping out of her house when the car entered the narrow lane and hit her, then sped away. She suffered serious injuries to her face and body and was rushed to a nearby hospital. The police have registered a case and are investigating.

K'taka moved fully to digital e-stamp system: Min

'The govt is phasing out traditional e-stamps and replacing them with e-stamps to prevent misuse and fake challans'

BENGALURU

The Karnataka government has officially ended the old e-stamp system and moved completely to a digital e-stamp process, said Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda.

Gowda, announcing the change at a press conference held at Vikas Soudha, explained that the new system has been in effect since October and is designed to make stamp-related work simpler, safer, and fully online.

The Minister said the government is phasing out traditional e-stamps and replacing them with digital e-stamps to prevent misuse and fake challans. Through the Karnataka Stamp Amendment Bill, 2025, digital signatures now have full legal recognition. This strengthens the system by allowing online fee payment, secure electronic signatures, and Aadhaar-based authentication for all transactions.

Digital e-stamps can also be used for unregistered agreements. Earlier, people had to visit shops to purchase printed stamp paper, often depending on middlemen. Now, citizens can buy stamp paper from home using an online portal. Once an agreement is created, it will be digitally stored, making it easy to retrieve anytime. The Minister noted that lost papers were a major problem earlier, but the digital system keeps permanent records.

The new digital agreements will include a unique number and QR code for verification. The fee for digital stamping will remain unchanged. To complete an agreement, Aadhaar details must be provided, and the process will be authenticated through an OTP system. Both parties involved in the agreement must use their Aadhaar details to complete the digital bond.

Krishna Byre Gowda said the system will make transactions safer, faster, and more transparent. The government aims to remove middlemen, prevent fraud, and make all stamping processes fully digital for public convenience.

'44K families received new homes under 94CC scheme'

KENGERI

'Priority is being given to improving village infrastructure, including new drainage works across the Gram Panchayat'.

In a major push for rural development, MLA ST Somashekar has announced that 44,000 families have been given housing after identifying eligible beneficiaries under the 94CC scheme.

He spoke at the inauguration of the first round of the Gram Sabha for 2025-26, held near Bhimana Kuppe Cross under the Ramohalli Gram Panchayat. The event was organized with support from the Bangalore City District Administration, Ramohalli Gram Panchayat, and various government departments.

The MLA said that priority is being given to improving village infrastructure, including new drainage works across the Gram Panchayat. He added that 14,000 houses are currently being built by the Slum Board in the constituency. A request has also been submitted to the Revenue Minister to regularize farming families cultivating Bagar Hukum land within 18 km of Bengaluru.

District Collector Jagdish urged officials to directly address complaints received through the Janaspandana program to prevent middlemen from creating hurdles. He emphasized that all government benefits and Gram Panchayat services must reach the rightful beneficiaries. He praised the Yeshwanthpur constituency for organizing Gram Sabha and Janaspandana like a public festival.

Ramohalli Gram Panchayat President G. Mahesh said that women's and children's protection has been given top priority. He shared that clean drinking water and sewage projects worth around ₹15 crore have already begun. He also appreciated the MLA's request to close bars and restaurants in the constituency for public welfare.

On the occasion, several benefits were distributed, including 94CC right deeds, tailoring machines for women, water filters, agricultural tools, vegetable kits, labor kits, free hostel facilities, and e-assets.

The program saw the presence of AC Vishwanath, Tehsildar Ashwini, Deputy Tehsildar Kempegowda, President Mahesh G., EO Narayan, BEO Rekha, and other local leaders.

GBA chief pushes faster e-Khata processing

BENGALURU

Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao has instructed officials to quickly clear all pending e-Khata applications across the five city corporations.

He issued these directions during a virtual meeting on e-Khata services, B-Khata to A-Khata conversion, and property tax matters.

Rao said a dedicated helpline (9480683035) has been set up for all e-Khata-related complaints. He advised officials to respond to every complaint within the given time limit. He also stressed that these complaints must be monitored separately to ensure faster solutions. Rejected applications, he said, should be reviewed carefully to identify mistakes and take corrective steps.

He highlighted the need to process new e-Khata applications and conversion requests without delay. According to him, clearing these applications quickly will help improve the corporation's revenue.

Special Commissioner Munish Moudgil shared that the e-Khata helpline receives nearly 1,000 calls daily. All issues raised through the helpline are tracked and resolved on priority. He reminded officials that applications should not be rejected without solid reasons. Corporation-wise reports will be prepared to understand rejection patterns and to speed up pending work.

Moudgil also said that commercial properties of major tax defaulters within GBA limits are being sealed to recover overdue taxes. Revision cases are also being examined to collect pending property tax amounts.

North City Corporation Commissioner Pommala Sunil Kumar noted that e-Khata applications in the North zone are being cleared quickly. Officials who rejected applications without proper justification have already been issued notices.

Commissioners Ramesh DS, Ramesh KN, Dr Rajendra KV, AC Daljit Kumar, and several officials from the Revenue Department attended the meeting.

'Job seekers' stir exposes govt apathy'

BENGALURU

Tensions rose in Dharwad as job aspirants protested against the Karnataka government's prolonged delay in government recruitment. Opposition leader R Ashoka criticized the state Congress administration for prioritizing political games over governance, saying administrative machinery has suffered amid leadership changes.

The protest in Dharwad turned violent, prompting Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to issue an order for immediate recruitment and call for the release of arrested examinees.

Ashoka highlighted that promises of job guarantees remain unfulfilled, asking, "Where is Swami's job guarantee? Where is the hiring luck?" He posted a video condemning the government for neglecting citizens' employment concerns.

Ashoka also criticized IT-BT Minister Mallikarjun Kharge for ignoring technological innovation, claiming his focus remains on political intrigues, including controversial matters unrelated to his portfolio. This apathy, he argued, has caused a 40 percent decline in start-up investments, weakening Karnataka's position as a hub for innovation.

City begins planning for major pulse polio drive

BENGALURU

The Greater Bangalore Authority (GBA) has begun preparations for the National Pulse Polio drive, scheduled from December 21 to 24, 2025. GBA Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao directed officials to create a detailed micro plan to ensure every child in the city receives polio drops safely and on time.

Speaking at a meeting held at the GBA head office, Rao said the plan must fully cover all four days of the campaign. He stressed that awareness programs should be organised across the city so every family understands the importance of Pulse Polio. He also instructed officials to involve students from nursing, medical, and paramedical colleges as volunteers to support the drive.

Mobile vaccination teams will be deployed in crowded locations such as bus stands, markets, metro and railway stations, malls, large parks, slums, and other high-density areas. These teams will help reach families who may otherwise miss the vaccination booths.

Special Commissioner Surolkar Vikas Kishore said that vaccination booths will operate on December 21 from 8 am to 5 pm. From December 22 to 24, health workers will go door-to-door to ensure every child is covered. Extra focus will be given to slum areas, migrant communities, and other densely populated pockets of the city.

All children from birth to five years must receive two drops of the polio vaccine. These will be available at clinics, primary health centres, maternity and referral hospitals, private hospitals, and medical college hospitals.

Rao also instructed officials to prepare the final list of beneficiaries eligible for welfare schemes under the five municipal corporations of the GBA. The meeting was attended by senior commissioners, health officials, and other department heads, who agreed to coordinate efforts for a smooth campaign.

KSSKC chairperson promises full support to pourakarmikas

BENGALURU

A direct interaction meeting was held in Jayanagar, where Karnataka State Safai Karmachari Commission (KSSKC) Chairperson P Raghu met pourakarmikas, loaders, cleaners, auto-tipper drivers and other sanitation staff working under Bengaluru South City Corporation.

Workers shared many concerns, such as lack of basic facilities, delays in recruitment, problems with compensation for families of deceased workers, PF issues, biometric attendance errors, pending wages and the shortage of toilets and restrooms.

Raghu listened carefully to every complaint and instructed officials to take quick action. He said that there will be no compromise on the facilities that sanitation workers are legally entitled to receive. To support the workers, he issued several directions. He ordered officials to issue pending appointment orders within one week and to expand restroom facilities in every ward. He stressed that every mustering point must have a restroom, toilet and clean drinking water.

'There will be no compromise on the facilities that sanitation workers are legally entitled to receive. very mustering point must have a restroom, toilet and clean drinking water'

He warned that hotels refusing toilet access to pourakarmikas will face notices and legal action. Public toilets in parks must be maintained well and made available for workers. Cases of pending salaries due to technical problems must be cleared immediately, and families of workers who die while on duty must receive compensation without delay.

He added that compassionate appointment cases are being considered by the government and that compensation of ₹10 lakh must reach families properly.

Health check-ups every three months and yearly master check-ups must be ensured. He asked officials to coordinate with the Social Welfare Department to provide required Sindhutva certificates. He also directed the Labour Department to ensure timely PF and ESI payments.

Raghu urged senior officers to treat sanitation workers with respect. He shared a meal with them, saying their hard work keeps the city clean and they must feel supported.

Celebration highlights Puttanna Kanagal's cultural legacy

BENGALURU

The rich cultural legacy of legendary filmmaker Puttanna Kanagal was remembered with deep respect during his 93rd birthday celebration held at Kondajji Basappa Hall. Speaking at the event, Chief Minister's Media Adviser K.V. Prabhakar said Puttanna Kanagal was a true weaver of Kannada culture, blending emotions, art, literature, and cinema in a unique way.

The event was organised by the Karnataka Film Directors Association, which also honoured its Rajyotsava Award recipients. Prabhakar said Kanagal created a strong bridge between literature and cinema by bringing stories to the screen with honesty and depth. He noted that Kanagal introduced readers to cinema and viewers to literature, enriching both art forms.

Kanagal's adaptations of famous Kannada literary works remain some of the most respected films in the industry. Movies like Sharapanjara, Naagarahaavu, Belli Moda, Gejje Pooje, Katha Sangama, Manasa Sarovara, and Ranganayaki were recalled as masterpieces that showcased his emotional strength and artistic fusion.

COOLING DOWN

Winter effect: Bengaluru shivers in December drizzles

BENGALURU

Bengaluru is set for cooler days ahead as the city experiences a notable dip in temperatures, with light to moderate rain expected through the first week of December. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) attributed the change to Cyclone Ditwah over the Bay of Bengal.

The IMD forecast generally cloudy skies until Tuesday, accompanied by mist in some areas during early mornings. Maximum temperatures are expected to hover around 21–22°C, nearly six degrees below the seasonal average of 26.9°C. Nighttime lows are predicted at 18°C, slightly above the 15-year December average of 16.4°C. On Sunday, Bengaluru recorded a maximum of 21.6°C and a minimum of 18.4°C, both below normal.

Historically, Bengaluru's lowest December temperature over the last 15 years was 12.8°C on December 24, 2011, and the city's all-time low remains 7.8°C recorded on January 13, 1884

Light rain with sustained winds of 30–40 kmph is likely on Monday, with similar weather conditions persisting for the rest of the week. While Cyclone Ditwah caused severe devastation in Sri Lanka, it weakened into a depression near India without making landfall.

Since November 27, the city's temperatures have dropped 2–6 degrees below normal due to cyclonic conditions in the Bay of Bengal. Historically, Bengaluru's lowest December temperature over the last 15 years was 12.8°C on December 24, 2011, and the city's all-time low remains 7.8°C recorded on January 13, 1884.

Residents are advised to carry umbrellas and wear warm clothing, as the unusual chill and intermittent rains are likely to continue, affecting daily life and travel. The weather shift offers a welcome break from Bengaluru's usual warmth but calls for caution during wet and misty mornings.

'Bengaluru water tariffs to increase every April'

BENGALURU

Bengaluru residents should expect an annual hike in water tariffs, the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) announced. Chairman Ram Prasat Manohar said that starting next April, water rates will be revised each year in line with rising prices.

Last April, the board had raised water rates by 1 paise per litre, surprising many residents. The new policy formalizes yearly adjustments to ensure the board meets its operational costs. Currently, BWSSB requires Rs 200 crore for operations but collects only Rs 120 crore, creating a shortfall that will now be addressed through tariff increases.

Manohar added that rising prices of construction materials such as steel, cement, and iron also contribute to the need for higher rates. The Administrative Reform Department has framed rules to implement the annual revision, ensuring that water tariffs remain aligned with operational and infrastructure costs.

QUICK READ

Traffic fine payment sees huge discount rush

Bengaluru

Bengaluru witnessed a massive response to the 50% discount on traffic fines offered by the state government. In just 10 days, over ₹8 crore was collected, settling 2,82,793 traffic violation cases. The scheme, running until December 12, encouraged many motorists to clear pending fines quickly. Officials said the initiative aimed to reduce pending cases and improve road discipline. Citizens welcomed the offer, calling it a helpful chance to avoid extra penalties. Traffic authorities continue to manage payments and ensure proper records are updated across the state.

Brothers caught stealing mobiles from buses

Bengaluru

Bengaluru's Kengeri police have arrested two brothers from Bagepalli, Chikkaballapur, for repeatedly stealing mobile phones and wallets in the city. The duo targeted crowded buses, tricking victims by falsely accusing someone at the bus stop of theft. When the victim got off to confront the innocent person, the brothers would exit at the next stop and escape. They have been linked to multiple theft cases across Bengaluru. Police are now investigating to determine the total number of stolen items. The swift action of Kengeri police ended their daily spree of mobile and wallet thefts.

People's active role makes democracy stronger: CM

Gram panchayats must grow into real centers of local power, says Chief Minister after giving away Gandhigram Puraskar to 238 GPs

BENGALURU

The state government honored 238 gram panchayats with the 'Gandhigram Puraskar' for 2023–24 at a ceremony held at the Vidhana Soudha Banquet Hall. Each Panchayat received ₹5 lakh and a memento for its efforts.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said that democracy becomes stronger when people participate more, and Gram Panchayats must grow into real centers of local power. He also launched the upgraded e-Swattu 2.0 software during the event.

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said the government is working to bring e-property services to people's doorsteps. He announced that 11B accounts will now be issued for all Panchayat property records. Applicants will receive these accounts within 15 days, and people no longer need to visit offices. Property tax payment and record corrections can now be handled online or at Bapuji Centres.

Rural Development, IT and BT Minister Priyank Kharge explained that the new e-asset 2.0 software is designed to increase the financial strength of Gram Panchayats. Many families living outside Panchayat limits without land conversion have been using civic services like water, roads and streetlights. This created a financial burden for Panchayats. To address this, the government amended the Karnataka Gram Swaraj and Panchayat Raj Act and introduced new rules effective from October 17, 2025.

The rules explain how new properties will be taxed, how assessments will be made and how tax recovery should happen. Updated responsibilities for Gram Panchayat, Taluk Panchayat and Zilla Panchayat officials have also been clearly defined.

E-Swattu 2.0

E-Swattu 2.0 now allows rural residents to access property documents digitally through e-Khata. Digital certificates (Forms 11A and 11B) for public property records are also being enabled. Though technical issues may occur initially, the department has promised quick solutions. A dedicated E-Swattu Helpline (9483476000) has been launched for public support.

LS clears move to elect IISc council members

BENGALURU

The election of two Lok Sabha members will strengthen the governance of IISc, which is India's top science education and research institution

The Lok Sabha on Monday approved a resolution to elect two members of the House to the Council of the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru. The resolution was moved by Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan during the Winter Session. Despite ongoing protests related to the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls in 12 states and Union Territories, the motion was adopted through a voice vote.

Pradhan said the election of two Lok Sabha members will strengthen the governance of IISc, which is India's top science education and research institution. The IISc Council plays an important role in guiding the institution's administration, planning, and long-term development. It works to improve infrastructure, research capabilities, and global partnerships.

The Council includes representatives from the Central Government, the Karnataka Government, Tata Trusts, UGC, AICTE, the Association of Indian Universities, and members from both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha. With the approval of this resolution, the process to elect two new members from the House can now begin.

The decision is expected to help IISc continue expanding its academic strength and global presence. Pradhan noted that the inclusion of elected members ensures that Parliament stays connected with the institute's progress and future needs. The move is seen as a step toward improving coordination between policymakers and premier educational institutions in the country.

By enhancing representation and strengthening the council, the government aims to support IISc's efforts toward innovation, high-quality research, and international collaboration.

BJP slams Priyank Kharge over decline in startup funding

BENGALURU

The Karnataka BJP has strongly criticised Rural Development, Panchayat Raj, IT and BT Minister Priyank Kharge, accusing him of ignoring his responsibilities after reports showed a 40 per cent drop in startup investment in the state this year. The party said the minister is more focused on political remarks than on supporting technology and innovation.

Leader of Opposition R. Ashoka said on Monday that while the minister shows "great interest in political mockery," he shows "no interest in technological innovation." He added that Priyank Kharge spends time commenting on issues unrelated to his portfolio and often speaks about banning the RSS, instead of focusing on Karnataka's innovation goals.

Ashoka claimed that the minister's "indifference and inactivity" have contributed to the steep fall in startup funding. He said Karnataka and Bengaluru, once considered the heart of India's innovation ecosystem, are now losing their lead to other states. He argued that Karnataka needs an active IT minister who supports young innovators and investors, rather than someone who "acts like a troll minister."

He further said the state cannot progress under the current Congress-led government, calling it "cursed" and harmful to Karnataka's growth. Ashoka cited data from Tracxn, a Bengaluru-based market intelligence platform, which showed that the first half of 2025 saw a 44 per cent year-on-year drop in startup funding. Q1 2025 alone reported a 23 per cent decline compared to the last quarter of 2024.

Ashoka also criticised the government's proposed tunnel road project in Bengaluru. He questioned why Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar is pushing an "unscientific" Rs 18,500-crore tunnel plan despite public opposition and environmental concerns. He alleged that the project is a "collection scheme" meant to raise funds for political ambitions.

UP IN ARMS AGAINST LABOUR CODES

Anganwadi workers under the aegis of AITUC and CITU stage a protest at Freedom Park in Bengaluru on Monday, demanding the cancellation of the Shrama Shakti Niti 2025 (Labour Power 2025) ▸ CH PHOTO

FIR filed after actress cousin's tragic death

BENGALURU

The investigation into the heartbreaking death of Achala, cousin of actress Ashika Ranganath, has intensified as Puttenahalli police officially registered an FIR against the accused, Mayank Gowda.

Achala died by suicide on November 21 within the Puttenahalli police limits, and the case has since drawn public attention due to the serious allegations made by her family.

According to the complaint filed by her father, Harsha, Mayank Gowda had allegedly pretended to be in love with Achala and frequently met her. Harsha stated that Mayank repeatedly pressured his daughter into a physical relationship. When she refused, he allegedly assaulted her and threatened to kill her, creating immense fear and emotional distress. Harsha believes this harassment pushed his daughter towards the extreme step.

Following the complaint, the Puttenahalli police registered an FIR under BNS Sections 108 and 352, covering abetment of suicide and sexual harassment. The police team has now stepped up the investigation, examining every angle to understand the events leading up to Achala's death.

During the early stages of the probe, officers said they had not found a suicide note or immediate evidence supporting the allegations made by Achala's parents. To gather clearer insights, Achala's mobile phone has been sent to the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL). Investigators expect the retrieved chats, call-detail records, and other digital traces to play a crucial role in confirming the nature of Achala's relationship with the accused.

Police officials said that if the FSL report provides evidence of threats, harassment, or coercion, they will take strict legal action against Mayank Gowda. The family continues to seek justice, hoping the investigation brings the full truth to light.

Jobless man steals 21 laptops in Bengaluru

BENGALURU

A young man seeking employment in Bengaluru turned to theft after failing to secure a job, police said. Govardhan, a BA graduate from Chittoor, Andhra Pradesh, arrived in the city four months ago and initially stayed at a friend's PG. Frustrated by unemployment and financial struggles, he stole a laptop from his friend's PG and sold it at a low price.

The habit escalated, and Govardhan began targeting other PGs across the city, eventually stealing and selling a total of 21 laptops. The Mico Layout police took him into custody after an investigation and recovered the stolen devices. Police have said the man acted out of desperation, highlighting the challenges faced by young job seekers in the city.

In a separate case, four youths were caught on CCTV stealing a scooter parked near Uttarahalli. The scooter's owner had left the keys in the vehicle. When he approached Subrahmanyapur police to file a complaint, he was reportedly asked to produce additional documents before an FIR could be registered, causing frustration for the victim.

Police have urged residents to remain vigilant and secure their belongings while investigations continue. These incidents underscore the pressures of urban life for newcomers seeking work and the risks posed by opportunistic crime. Authorities said stricter monitoring of PGs and quick police response could help prevent similar thefts in the future.

EPF Co op Bank loses ₹60 cr funds; CID steps up probe

BENGALURU

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has stepped up its probe into the shocking Rs 60 crore fraud at the EPF Cooperative Bank. Investigators revealed that the accused, Jagadish, planned the scheme in a calculated, almost movie like manner to misappropriate funds belonging to the poor, elderly, and disabled.

According to the CID, the money deposited by investors was initially kept in the DCC Bank, Malleswaram. From there, it was transferred through cheques to the accounts of relatives before being moved to foreign accounts. Jagadish is reported to have invested in real estate, restaurants in Dubai, and race courses abroad, making recovery of the funds challenging due to technical and legal hurdles in tracing foreign assets.

Jagadish was employed on a contract basis rather than as a full-time employee, adding another layer of complexity to the investigation. Authorities noted that even the process of arresting him involved procedural difficulties.

The misuse of funds has caused distress among the contributors, many of whom are vulnerable groups relying on EPF savings for financial security. Officials are working to track all transactions, both domestic and international, to recover the misappropriated money and bring those responsible to justice.

The CID has intensified its efforts to ensure that all involved parties are identified and held accountable. The case has drawn widespread attention because of the scale of the fraud and the sophisticated planning used to divert public money abroad.

Autorickshaw driver flees with cop inside vehicle

BENGALURU

In a shocking incident in Sadashivanagar, Bengaluru, an autorickshaw driver allegedly sped away with traffic constable Radhakrishna inside after causing an accident on a one-way street near 10th Cross on Thursday night. The constable had stopped the rickshaw for crashing into a scooter and asked the driver to go to the police station. Instead, the driver drove recklessly toward Hebbal, damaging the constable's walkie-talkie, and abandoned the vehicle in Ganganagar before fleeing. Police found a dagger under the seat. A case has been registered under Sections 132, 281, and 324 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023.

WHY THIS BIAS?

Hotels Association challenges HC on menstrual leave order

BENGALURU

The Bangalore Hotels Association (BHA) has approached the Karnataka High Court against the state government's recent directive making menstrual leave mandatory for women employees across various sectors.

The association questioned the basis of the order, noting that the state itself has not extended such leave to women working in government departments.

On November 12, 2025, the Labour Department issued a notification requiring all establishments under the Factories Act, Shops and Commercial Establishments Act, Plantations Labour Act, Beedi and Cigar Workers Act, and Motor Transport Workers Act to grant one day of menstrual leave per month, totaling 12 days annually. The directive applies to permanent, contract, and outsourced women employees.

The BHA argued that none of these laws empower the government to mandate menstrual leave and claimed that leave policies should fall within the internal administrative domain of individual organisations. The association also called the order "discriminatory," pointing out that the state, despite being one of the largest employers of women, has not implemented a similar provision for its own workforce.

Advocate B.K. Prashanth is representing the BHA in the case. P.C. Rao, honorary president of the association, said the petition is expected to be listed soon before a bench headed by Justice Jyoti Moolimani.

The challenge highlights tensions between employee welfare measures and organisational autonomy, as the state government moves to expand women-centric benefits while businesses question legal authority and uniformity in implementation.

QUICK READ

LLB student dies in bike–jeep collision near Beluru

Hassan

A tragic accident near Hiriasade village in Beluru taluk claimed the life of 22-year-old Chandan, an LLB student. The incident occurred when a jeep transporting labourers collided head-on with the bike on which Chandan was travelling to college. The impact was so severe that he died on the spot. Bharath, who was riding pillion, sustained serious injuries and has been admitted to the hospital for treatment. The accident took place within the jurisdiction of the Arehalli Police Sta-tion. Officers visited the scene and conducted an inspection. Heart-wrenching scenes unfolded as the victim's parents broke down in grief beside the body.

10-year-old boy drowns while swimming with friends

Ballari

A tragic incident unfolded at Bandihalli in Hagaribommanahalli taluk of Vijayanagar district, where a 10-year-old boy drowned while swimming in a lake with his friends. The deceased has been identified as Prithvi, son of teacher U. Gonibasappa. He was a Class 4 student at Rashtrotthana Vidyakêndra (CBSE). Prithvi had gone to the lake along with five classmates for a swim. While in the water, both Prithvi and another boy, Akash, began drowning. Nearby shep-herds noticed the boys struggling and managed to save Akash. Unfortunately, they could not rescue Prithvi in time. A case has been registered at the Hagaribommanahalli police station, and further investigation is underway.

Students expelled for wearing mala; Hindu leaders protest

A Chikkamagaluru college sparked controversy after expelling two students for wearing Ayyappa mala, prompting outrage from Hindu leaders

CHIKKAMAGALURU

In Chikkamagaluru, a controversy erupted at a private college after two students wearing the Ayyappa Swamy mala were asked to leave the campus. The students, who had worn black at-tire along with their college uniforms, were told by the administration to remove the mala before entering, following which they were stopped outside the college.

The incident triggered strong reactions from Hindu organisations. Leaders from the Bajrang Dal, BJP District President Devaraj Shetty, and

Yuva Morcha President Santosh visited the college and criticised the administration. They questioned why the college objected to the mala while al-lowing other religious symbols, asking, "When students come wearing burkhas, you stay silent. Why create an issue now?"

College authorities claimed that a new rule had been implemented this year prohibiting the wear-ing of the mala on campus. However, the Hindu leaders countered that this was not a govern-ment directive but an internally imposed decision. They argued that even government officials wear the mala while on duty and insisted that such traditions cannot be restricted without valid reason.

The situation intensified when the activists raised Ayyappa chants inside the principal's office, expressing their anger. After heated discussions, the college administration eventually agreed to allow the students back into their classes, bringing temporary relief to the tense atmosphere.

Students detained during job demand protest

DHARWAD

In Dharwad, a group of job-seeking students staged a protest rally at Srinagar Circle, demanding employment opportunities. Despite the police department denying permission for the demonstra-tion, the organisation Jan Samanyara Vedike went ahead with the protest. Authorities had warned the organisers not to proceed without clearly outlining the rally's plan, but the group ignored the directive.

The protest began at Srinagar Circle without official approval, leading to slogans against the state government as students expressed their frustration over unemployment. Police quickly inter-vened, detaining several participants for violating regulations.

The situation escalated into high drama in the busy junction, drawing public attention. Police Commissioner N. Shashikumar arrived at the spot to take stock of the situation and ensure or-der.

With tensions running high, the incident highlights the growing unrest among youth over job con-cerns and the tightening stance of authorities on unauthorised protests in the city.

Kolhapur's Kanneri Math seer, Adrushya Kadasiddheshwar Swamiji, sparked controversy by calling saffron-clad Lingayat seers "Basava Talibanis" during a Bajrang Dal Hanuma Mala event

Kanneri Swamiji sparks fresh controversy targeting Lingayat seers

BELAGAVI

Kolhapur's Kanneri Math seer, Adrushya Kadasiddheshwar Swamiji, has once again stirred con-troversy with a provocative statement. Speaking at a Hanuma Mala initiation event organised by Bajrang Dal in Raibag town of Belagavi district, he referred to saffron-clad Lingayat seers as "Basava Talibanis," drawing sharp criticism.

Explaining the spiritual significance of the Hanuma mala, he said it acts like an inner "policeman" that stops devotees from wrongdoing. He joked that if someone wearing the mala tries to approach a liquor shop or wander towards inappropriate places, the mala reminds them of their vow.

He added that people travelling to Pandharpur wear a similar mala, which guides them to-wards good conduct.

However, the Swamiji's remarks took a controversial turn when he claimed that communists and "Basava Talibanis" in saffron robes criticise the tradition of wearing the mala. His statement was perceived as a direct attack on certain Lingayat seers.

Continuing his criticism, he said some swamijis oppose devotional practices while behaving irre-sponsibly themselves. "Why should such people run mutts? Why misuse monastic life?" he questioned, adding that those who cannot uphold discipline should leave their religious positions. He further accused a few of abandoning spiritual conduct at night and visiting hotels and bars.

This is not the first time Kanneri Swamiji has made contentious comments. His earlier remarks targeting various religious traditions led to entry bans in districts like Vijayapura. His latest speech has reignited debates about the conduct of seers and the boundaries of religious commentary in Karnataka.

HC Balakrishna slams HDK for remarks on seers

RAMANAGARA

HC Balakrishna criticises HD Kumaraswamy's remarks on seers, questioning whether Deve Gowda and Kumaraswamy rose to power without their blessings

Ramanagara MLA HC Balakrishna strongly criticised former Chief Minister HD Kumaraswamy for his recent comments suggesting that seers should avoid political involvement and focus only on protecting religion. Addressing a press conference, Balakrishna said Kumaraswamy must stop making "casual and disrespectful remarks" about revered seers.

He questioned whether Kumaraswamy and his father, former PM HD Deve Gowda, would have reached top positions without the blessings of the very same seers he now comments about. "When Kumaraswamy became Chief Minister, did he do so without the blessings of the seers? Is he now claiming to be some self-proclaimed divine figure?" Balakrishna asked sharply.

Recalling his early political days, Balakrishna said that during the Chennareddy Commission pro-test years ago, the movement was led by the Chunchanagiri seer, and that struggle eventually helped make Deve Gowda the Chief Minister. "Back then, Kumaraswamy benefitted from the support of seers. Now, how can he belittle them?" he questioned.

Responding to Kumaraswamy's comments on a so-called "November Revolution," Balakrishna dismissed the idea, saying no such revolution currently exists. He asserted that leaders are pre-paring for the political battles ahead in 2028.

Speaking about the ongoing debate over the internal agreement between the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister, Balakrishna said there is no need to publicly discuss the details at this stage. "When the time is right, all doubts and curiosity will be addressed," he assured.

Balakrishna's remarks have added a new dimension to the political tension between JD(S) lead-ers and party critics, particularly over the perceived role of religious institutions in Karnataka poli-tics.

Burglars steal gold worth ₹44.60 lakh from home

UDUPI

A major burglary was reported in Inolkadu, Udupi, on Saturday night after thieves broke into a house and escaped with gold ornaments worth ₹44.60 lakh. Shaila Wilhelmina (53) and her fami-ly had finished dinner and gone to sleep when the incident occurred. The burglars allegedly en-tered the house and opened a cupboard in one of the rooms, stealing 368 grams of gold jewel-lery kept inside. The theft came to light the next morning when the family searched for the or-naments while getting ready for church. A complaint has been registered at the Udupi Town Po-lice Station, and an investigation is underway to trace the culprits and recover the stolen valua-bles.

Parameshwar's sudden visit to Kodimath sparks political curiosity

HASSAN

In a move that has drawn widespread attention, Karnataka Home Minister G. Parameshwar made an unannounced visit to the Kodimath in Harnahalli village of Arsikere taluk, Hassan district. Without informing local Congress leaders, the Home Minister arrived quietly, accompanied only by MLA and Home Committee Chairman K.M. Shivalingegowda and a few close associates.

During the visit, Parameshwar sought the blessings of Kodimath seer Sri Shivananda Shivayogi Rajendra Swamiji. Sources suggest that the meeting included a private discussion between the two, during which Parameshwar reportedly sought guidance about future developments.

The timing of this sudden visit has raised eyebrows in political circles. With an intense battle for the Chief Minister's post currently underway, Parameshwar's quiet trip to the influential math has sparked speculation about whether it is connected to the ongoing power struggle within the government.

Although no official statement has been released regarding the nature of the discussion, observers believe Parameshwar's outreach to the math could be an effort to gain spiritual backing or to gauge support during this critical phase. His unexpected appearance has added yet another layer of intrigue to Karnataka's evolving political landscape.

HIV patients' privacy must be protected: Judge Santosh

SHIVAMOGGA

At the World AIDS Day programme held at the IMA Hall of Meggan Hospital in Shivamogga, Senior Civil Judge and District Legal Services Authority Member-Secretary Santosh A.S. emphasised that the privacy of individuals living with HIV cannot be disclosed without their explicit consent. Doing so, he cautioned, constitutes a violation of the protected person's rights as defined under the law.

He explained that Section 2(s) of the Act identifies three categories as "protected persons": individuals living with HIV, those who previously lived with them, and those currently living with them. Any breach of privacy can invite strict legal penalties, including imprisonment ranging from three months to two years and fines up to ₹1 lakh. He added that HIV-infected individuals can seek assistance through the Legal Services Clinic, which offers guidance through panel lawyers.

The event was jointly organised by the District Legal Services Authority, district administration, health department, police, medical associations, NGOs, and nursing institutions under the theme "Ending Barriers to HIV/AIDS Prevention."

District AIDS Control Officer Dr. Nagesh B.P. said Shivamogga has 121 counselling and testing centres. During 2024–25, about 1,32,868 people underwent HIV testing, and 249 tested positive. Under the EV THS programme, 31,688 pregnant women were tested, and eight cases were detected. Awareness efforts are being carried out in schools, colleges, and communities through Red Ribbon Clubs, blood donation drives, competitions, marathons, dramas, and social media outreach.

Earlier, Principal District and Sessions Judge Manjunath G.A. inaugurated an awareness rally from the district court premises to the IMA Hall. The programme saw participation from health officials, students, NGOs, and various organisations working toward HIV prevention and awareness.

Shivamogga police intensify crackdown on ganja and narcotics

SHIVAMOGGA

The Shivamogga district police have adopted a strict zero-tolerance policy toward ganja use, sale, transport, cultivation, and storage, declaring all such activities as serious punishable offenc-es. Addressing the media, Superintendent of Police G.K. Mithun Kumar said comprehensive measures have been taken across the district to curb narcotics at the grassroots level.

In 2025 alone, Shivamogga city registered 563 ganja consumption cases, and action was taken against 671 individuals. Additionally, 85 cases related to illegal sale, transport, and cultivation were recorded, with 65 accused booked.

To reinforce enforcement, special patrol teams, area-domination units, and QRT teams operated from 6 pm to 10 pm daily in sensitive zones. Suspected users were taken for medical tests, and those confirmed positive were booked under the NDPS Act. A total of 519 operations were con-ducted in 2025, with 2,796 people tested—279 of whom were confirmed users and charged ac-cordingly.

Police also used drones to identify ganja cultivation in forest areas, filing three cases and arrest-ing six accused. Under the Drug-Free Karnataka campaign, officers conducted awareness pro-grams in educational institutions, explaining the Drug-Free Karnataka app, toll-free helpline 1098, and the MANASA portal 1933. Over 613 awareness programs reached 52,000 students. Police held bi-monthly inter-departmental meetings to strengthen coordination. SP Mithun Kumar also detailed the swift detection of the Basamma murder case in Kumsi, where two accused were arrested and stolen gold recovered.

He advised elderly citizens living alone to install alarm systems and CCTV cameras for safety. Traffic reforms are also underway in Shivamogga, with key congestion points identified for improved lighting, CCTV coverage, and security deployment.

TWO TEMPLE THEFTS

Two temple hundis robbed on the same day in district

TUMAKURU

Tumakuru district witnessed a worrying rise in theft incidents, with two temples targeted on the same day. The first case occurred at the Mallikarjuna Swamy Temple in Tiptur, where a thief attempted to break open the temple's hundi. He sneaked into the premises after locking the tem-ple manager's house from outside, damaged the CCTV cameras, and then entered the sanctum area to loot the donations.

However, the manager grew suspicious and alerted neighbours. When locals rushed to the tem-ple, they caught the thief red-handed. Before being handed over to the police, the public thrashed him for attempting to steal from a holy place. Police recovered two stolen gold chains, along with tools such as an iron rod, knife, and screwdriver used for the break-in.

In another incident the same day, thieves targeted the Anjaneya Swamy Temple at Yakkalakette village in Gubbi taluk. CCTV footage captured the masked thieves entering the temple with an iron rod. They forcibly broke open the hundi and escaped with the collected offerings.

A case has been registered at the Cheluru Police Station, and efforts are underway to trace the culprits. Both incidents have sparked concern among residents, who are urging authorities to in-crease security around temples in the district.

QUICK READ

Free training workshop on agricultural machinery

Chitradurga

A three-day free training workshop on agricultural machinery will be conducted from December 4 to 6, jointly organized by the District Agricultural Training Centre, Babbur, and the Agricultural Machinery Testing and Training Centre. The workshop will cover the importance, usage, and maintenance of various farming equipment. On the first day, Dr. Sharanappa Jangadi will brief farmers on agricultural and horticultural machinery, while irrigation expert Devaraj from Tumakuru will explain efficient water management using drip and sprinkler systems. The second day will feature technical sessions on tractor-operated implements, waste management tools, crop protection equipment, diesel pump sets, nano-fertilizers, and drone usage by experts from local organizations and IFCO.

'Anna Suvidha' scheme delivers ration to seniors' doorsteps

Chitradurga

The Food, Civil Supplies, and Consumer Affairs Department has launched the "Anna Suvidha" scheme to deliver ration directly to the homes of senior citizens aged 75 and above who hold single-member ration cards. Announced in the last state budget, the scheme ensures that eligible seniors receive essential food supplies without visiting the shops. In Chitradurga district, 6,295 single-member ration cardholders have been identified. Distribution will cover all taluks: Challakere (1,514 cards), Chitradurga (1,106), Hiriyuru (1,460), Holalkere (866), Hosadurga (912), and Molakalmuru (437). Ration shop owners will collect OTP-based consent from beneficiaries between the 1st and 5th of each month and deliver supplies from the 6th to 15th, verifying recipients through OTP and biometric checks. Even those exempt from biometric verification will receive rations under the scheme. Shop owners are compensated ₹50 per card for home delivery. The department urges senior citizens to take advantage of the "Anna Suvidha" program to receive their monthly ration conveniently at their doorsteps.

Fair price shop licenses cannot be transferred: HC reiterates

The Karnataka High Court has reaffirmed that fair price shop licences are non-transferable, dismissing a petition seeking authorisation transfer

BENGALURU

The Karnataka High Court has once again made it clear that the licence or authorisation granted to operate a fair price shop under the Public Distribution System (PDS) cannot be transferred from one person to another under any circumstances.

Justice Suraj Govindaraj delivered the ruling while dismissing a petition filed by Lakshmamma, who had approached the court seeking to quash an endorsement issued by authorities rejecting her request for transfer of the fair price shop authorisation. She had sought directions to consider her representation and allow the licence to be transferred in her favour.

The court examined Rule 13 of the Karnataka Essential Commodities (Public Distribution System) Control Order, 1992, which governs the functioning of fair price shops across the state. Citing the explicit provisions of the rule, the judge noted that the law categorically prohibits both the transfer of authorisation by an existing licence holder and the operation of a shop by any transferee on behalf of the authorised dealer.

The bench stated: "A perusal of Rule 13 and the Proviso would indicate that no authorized dealer shall assign or transfer his authorization to any other person and no person shall carry on business as a transferee or otherwise on behalf of such authorized dealer." On this basis, the court held that Lakshmamma's request had no legal backing. Since there is a clear statutory bar on such transfers, the petitioner had no vested right to seek one, and therefore, the court could not issue a mandamus directing authorities to consider her request.

With these observations, the High Court dismissed the petition, reinforcing its earlier stance that fair price shop authorisations are non-transferable and must remain solely with the person to whom they were originally granted.

Kolar police enforce compulsory helmet rule

KOLAR

Kolar police have made helmets mandatory for two-wheeler riders and pillion passengers from December 1, conducting fines, vehicle seizures, and awareness drives

From December 1, the Kolar police have made it mandatory for both two-wheeler riders and pillion riders to wear helmets, launching a strict enforcement drive across the district. Officers were seen on roads fining riders without helmets and impounding vehicles, while those caught without helmets were provided one and allowed to proceed after paying the fine.

In a bid to encourage compliance, the police also distributed roses to riders wearing helmets, appreciating their responsible behavior. Kolar SP Nikhil B emphasized that the initiative aims to reduce bike accidents and promote road safety, urging the public to cooperate and avoid fines.

The police have been conducting awareness campaigns at bus stands, schools, and colleges, highlighting the importance of helmet use. Initial responses have been encouraging, with around 75 percent of riders complying on the first day.

Statistics show 284 fatalities in bike accidents in 2024, with 238 deaths reported so far in 2025, underscoring the urgency of the measure. Authorities have also warned that the helmet rule will be strictly enforced for pillion riders. Meanwhile, some helmet vendors are reportedly charging inflated prices, taking advantage of increased demand. The police appeal to the public to prioritize safety and follow the law to prevent accidents and save lives.

The drive reflects Kolar police's commitment to road safety, aiming to instill responsible riding habits and ensure compliance with traffic regulations across the district.

Mid-day meal workers stage protest demanding wage hike

MANGALURU

Mid-day meal workers in Mangaluru launched an indefinite dharna on Monday in front of the Mini Vidhana Soudha, demanding that the Union Government increase their wages and implement a fair minimum wage. The protest was organised under the banner of CITU, with workers raising slogans condemning what they described as the Centre's inhuman treatment of employees who play a crucial role in school nutrition programmes.

Inaugurating the dharna, senior trade union leader J. Balakrishna Shetty said that mid-day meal workers, who are already struggling with extremely low wages and harsh working conditions, cannot survive on the current honorarium of ₹4,500. He criticised the government for showing disrespect under the name of "honorarium" and urged workers to intensify their fight for dignity and fair pay.

CITU Dakshina Kannada district general secretary Sunil Kumar Bajal noted that the mid-day meal scheme was introduced in 2001, but since the Narendra Modi government came to power in 2014, the Centre has gradually reduced its financial contribution. Although official orders describe the work as four hours per day, workers across India put in nearly eight hours daily, he said, adding that successive governments have remained silent on their plight.

District president of the Mid-Day Meal Workers' Association, Padmavathi Shetty, demanded that the upcoming budget include the implementation of minimum wages, the scheme must not be privatised under any circumstances, and workers should be recognised as permanent government employees with all statutory benefits as recommended by the ILC.

Speakers Jayanta Nayak and Vasudeva Uchchil also addressed the gathering. The protest was led by CITU leaders Yogesh Jappinamogaru, Sundar Kumpala, and several women workers from the mid-day meal workforce.

World AIDS Day: Street play raises awareness

MANDYA

On World AIDS Day, a street play was organized at Mamateya Madilu, MIMS campus, by Krishaka Alliance Club, Parisara Alliance Club, and Mandavya Alliance Club. The event was inaugurated by K.T. Hanumantu, president of Nanjamma Motegowda Charitable Trust, with a ceremonial tomato-breaking ritual.

Speaking at the event, he emphasized that HIV is a virus and AIDS is a fatal disease. It can spread through unprotected sexual contact, contaminated syringes, or reuse of needles during tattoos. He stressed that HIV is not immediately deadly, and early diagnosis and treatment are essential. Awareness and educating others about the disease are crucial to prevention.

The street play, performed by artists Vairamudi, Basavaraju, Shobha P. Gowda, Shekhar Haniyambadi, Nagaraju, Vinuta, and Pooja, effectively highlighted HIV/AIDS awareness. Several community leaders, including Alliance Governor Chandrashekhar, Dhananjay Darasaguppe, Shivkumar, Arunanand, Mangal Yogesh, Pratibhanjali David, and teacher Shashidhar Echagere, attended the event, supporting the cause.

Chitradurga students selected for taluk-level Pratibha Karanji

CHITRADURGA

Students of K.R. Halli Morarji Desai Residential School in Bharamasagar have excelled in the recently held Cluster-Level Pratibha Karanji and Kalotsava competitions (Phase 2 and 3), securing first place in multiple events and earning selection to the taluk-level competitions.

In the primary category, sixth-grader T. Priya won first place in patriotic song, seventh-grader V. Sinchana in mimicry, V.M. Navya in poetry recitation, M. Dikshit in essay writing, P. Keertana in drawing, A.S. Ranjita in devotional song, and S. Saujanya in English elocution.

In the high school category, tenth-grader H. Chinmayi secured first place in English speech, while ninth-grader M. Deepa won first place in folk song. Ninth-grader Naveen S achieved third place in mimicry. Additionally, nine students from the school earned second-place positions in various events, and three students secured third place.

Elderly couple found dead in rented house

CHIKKABALLAPUR

In a tragic incident, an elderly couple was found dead in their rented home in Poolampalli village of Gudibande taluk, Chikkaballapur district. The couple, 70-year-old Ashwatthappa and his 60-year-old wife Hanumakka, had been living in the rented house for the past six months. Both their daughters are married.

Neighbors, noticing that the couple had not opened the house for several days, alerted the police. Gudibande police arrived around 10 a.m. on Monday, forced open the door, and discovered the bodies. The precise cause of death remains unclear, and authorities are investigating whether it was due to financial stress, personal or family issues, or a possible dispute over property. A case has been registered, and further investigation is underway.

Local resident Narasimhamurthy said that the couple had lived peacefully and had no apparent disputes or debts. "We had no idea about their death. They were doing fine, and their elder daughter supported them well," he said. The incident has raised concerns about elderly safety and the need for community vigilance.

'I'am unaware of who blocked my participation during PM's visit'

UDUPI

Former minister and BJP leader Pramod Madhwaraj expressed uncertainty over who was responsible for denying his participation in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent programme at Udupi Sri Krishna Matha. Speaking at a press conference at the Udupi district BJP office, he said he had hoped to be present at the inauguration of the golden kavacha he had donated to the Kanaka Kindi of the temple.

Madhwaraj said that as a devotee, he had offered the gold armour to the shrine, and the fact that the Prime Minister inaugurated it brought him immense satisfaction. "I expected that I too would get an opportunity to take part. My Aadhaar copy and photograph were collected four times. But my name was missing from the final list sent by the PMO, which I came to know through the SP on the night of November 27," he said. He added that he carries no disappointment or resentment over the matter.

He stated that he has no idea who prevented his inclusion and does not wish to speculate or accuse anyone without reason. "I do not know who kept me out or who tried to stop me from attending. If someone has indeed done this, it is their political misstep, not mine," he remarked.

BJP Udupi district president Kuthyar Naveen Shetty and leaders Dinkar Shetty Herg, Divakar Shetty, Reshma Uday Shetty, Srinidhi Hegde, and Srikant Nayak were also present.

DOCUMENT LOST

Ulfath Unnisa S. Co Zakeer K Hiriyur Town Hiriyur Taluk Chitradurga District in whose name Hiriyur municipal Property No. :-33-572-63 and Assessment no. :-6356/21/6356 and Site No. 21 Original Deed No. HYR - 1-02193-2015-16 & HYR -1-03371 - 2018-19 Rigister date 05-10-2018 Accidentally Lost 6 months ago. If anyone found it, please contact the above address or mobile number: 8453585538.

IN THE COURT OF THE HON'BLE SUBORDINATE JUDGE, DENKANIKOTTAI
MCOP. No. 69/2023

Rajasekar S/O Srinivasan, Hindu, aged about 30 Years, residing at D. NO 10/12, C Nethaji Nagar, Kelamangalam, Krishnagiri District.
..Petitioners
Vs
RI. Prithivi Raj, S/O. Ramesh Babu, Hindu, age not known residing at Chirayu Nilaya, No.27, Kitty Layout, Opp to Canara Bank, Anekal Taluk, Attibele Bangalore.
..Respondents

SUBSITUTE SERVICE NOTICE
Please take notice that the above petitioner has filed a petition under section 166 of Motor Vehicles Act against you before this Hon'ble Court and the same is posted to 11-12-2025 for your appearance, if They have any objections, they may appear either direct or through an Advocate before this Hon'ble Court on the above said date at 10.30 A.M and raise your objections failing which the Court may proceed to pass an exparte order on merits.

By order of the Court
Venkatesh Kumar R, B.A.., LL.B.,
ADVOCATE
MS. 1984/2012
HOSUR-635109.
Ph: 94432 23963 / 96556 35347

CHANGE OF NAME

I KISHAN M S/O MAHADEV RAMACHANDRA SETTY R/O # 416, 6th A Main Road, Behind H R B R Cosmopolitan Club, H R B R Layout, 2nd Block, Bangalore North, Kalyananagar, Bangalore North, Bengaluru, Karnataka - 560043, have changed the name of my minor son K.BHAVESH aged 14 years and he shall hereafter be known as MANU KISHAN.

CHANGE OF NAME

I SNEHA RAMESH KADAM W/O VIGNESH NARENDAR CHENNA, R/O Flat No S2, 2nd Floor, B Block, Golden Enclave, Phase 4, Shidedhahalli, Bagalagunte, Siddeshwara Layout, Bangalore North, Karnataka - 560073, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as SNEHA VIGNESH CHENNA.

CHANGE OF NAME

I PISHE JAGANATH S/O NARAYANARAO, R/O 636/6, Simpi Galli, beside ganesh Temple, Savanur, Haveri, Karnataka-581118, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as JANARDHAN NARAYANRAO PISE.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, JAYAMMA (old name), a resident of NO 300, BANNERGHATTAROAD, KAMBATTA HALLI ROAD, GOTTIGERE, Bengaluru, 560083, Karnataka, INDIA, have changed my name to JAYAMMA RAJANNA (NEW Name) vide affidavit dated 29-11-2025, sworn advocate and notary Mohammed Hussain K.

CH CLASSIFIEDS
To place a classified ad contact: **080-41209042**

NAME CHANGE

I, **U K D M L SOMIDEVI EVANI** (Usha kameswari Durga Maha Lakshmi Somidevi), W/o Konduri Siva Prasad, H-206, Sathya Sai Grama, Muddenahalli, Chickballapur, Karnataka, have changed my name to **KONDURI USHA** for all future purposes.

Document Lost

This is to inform to General public that my client Smt, Usha N.M. D/o Munikrishnappa,Residing at Near Anganawadi Center, Nagondanahalli White Field, Bengaluru North, Bengaluru,Karnataka, I am the Owner of the Below said Property,while Hakkupathra for taken Xerox copy ,have lost following Document of property pertating to below Mentioned property Situated at Nagondanahalli,K.R.Pura, Bengaluru south, K.R.Pura, Bengaluru, had published the factum of lost of her Original Hakkupathra no.32887,Copy Issued by Thasildar Bengaluru south taluk, Bengaluru,Dated;-13-02-1993, in respect of Property Bearing Syno.130, in formed a Sites in site no.126, in Measuring 40x30 Feets, Situated at Nagondanahalli,K.R.Pura, Bengaluru south, K.R.Pura, Bengaluru, police complaint have been filed with regards to loss of the above said Document vide complaint in NCR NO. Lost Report no. 1933965/2025, DATED;-01-12-2025, and complaint dated;-01-12-2025, by respective person,if anybody finds these Document please inform within 7 Days in Below mentioned Address.
Place;-Chinthamani
Date;-01-12-202 K.S.HARISH KUMAR
ADVOCATE
Office: NEAR KISHORE SCHOOL,
ABOVE APPOLO PHARMACY,
BESIDE SANTHOSHI MATHA TEMPLE, BANGALORE MAIN ROAD
CHINTHAMANI.M;-9980110692

Office of the Principal District and Sessions Judge, Bengaluru Rural District, Bengaluru
No. ACCTS/52/2025-26 (Xerox Outsource Hosakote) Date: 21.11.2025

E-TENDER NOTIFICATION

This office invites e-bidding for proposals through e-portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/#/portal/Auctions/live** from eligible private Xerox operators for **providing Photocopier Services by installing copier machines along with operators: (1) In the office of the Senior Civil Judge & JMFC, Hosakote. (2) In the office of the Prl. Civil Judge & JMFC, Hosakote, housed in the BMTC Building Hosakote (i.e., Men & Machine Work Services) on Cost/Rate per page basis, in Paisa and Rupees for a period of one year (Service period may be extended for two or more years (Total 3 years) renewable each year).** Tender Number (as issued by KPPP): HCK/2025-26/SE0105. Estimated Approx. Total Tender Cost: **Rs. 6,00,000/- per annum.** EMD: **Rs. 12,000/-.** Last date and time for submission of Tender Proposal: **10.12.2025 up to 5.00 PM.** Date of opening the Tender: Technical Bid: **11.12.2025 at 5.01 PM.** Financial Bid: **Upon approval of Technical Bid.** For further details contact: Phone No.: 080-22939382. E-mail: **bngrur002@gmail.com**
Sd/- I/c. Chief Administrative Officer,
District and Sessions Court, Bengaluru Rural District, Bengaluru.
DIPR/DD-C.P/4122/KSMCA/2025-26

MANAPPURAM HOME FINANCE LIMITED
FORMERLY MANAPPURAM HOME FINANCE PVT LTD
CIN : U65923KL2010PLC039179
Regd Office: IV/470A (OLD) W/638A (NEW) Manappuram House Valapad Thrissur, Kerala 680567
Corp Office: Manappuram Home Finance Limited, Third Floor, Unit No. 301 to 315, A Wing, 'Kanakia Wall Street', Andheri-Kurla Road, Andheri East, Mumbai-400093, Maharashtra.
Phone No.: 022-66211000, **Website:** www.manappuramhomefin.com

POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the authorised officer of **Manappuram Home Finance Ltd ("MAHOFIN")** under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest *[Act], 2002 (54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 9 of the security interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a **Demand Notice** calling upon the borrowers and co-borrowers to repay the amount mentioned in the notice and Interest thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken **Symbolic** possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said *[Act] read with rule 9 of the said rules. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Manappuram Home Finance Ltd as mentioned below for each of the respective properties:

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower and Co-borrower / Loan account number/ Branch	Description Of Secured Asset In Respect Of Which Interest Has Been Created	Date of Demand Notice sent & Outstanding Amount	Date of Possession
1	Shreenivasa K V, Prema Kumari N, Venkataravanappa C, **/NHL00930019484/** Tumkur	Property Bearing Katha No.106/83 And E-Katha No.152500301801500190, Measuring East To West: 12.192 Meters And North To South: 9.144 Meters, Situated At Singalikepura Village, Holavanahalli Hobli, Koratagere Taluk, Tumkur District,Karnataka Pin: 572129.East-Road,West-HouseofNanjamma,South-Galli, North-Road	18-08-2025 & Rs.529188/-	25-11-2025

Date: 2nd December 2025 | Place: KARNATAKA Sd/- Authorised Officer Manappuram Home Finance Ltd

QUICK READ

BJP Delegation Visits Bengal CEO amid Protests

Kolkata
A BJP delegation led by Leader of Opposition Suvendu Adhikari visited the West Bengal CEO's office on Monday, sparking protests by BLO forum members. The protesters demanded an extension of the SIR deadline and compensation for deceased BLOs' families. They shouted slogans and tried to breach police barricades as Adhikari and BJP MLAs entered to meet officials. Police had deployed extra forces to maintain order. The BJP delegation aimed to discuss issues concerning the ongoing Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls.

Youth Assaulted, Humiliated in Deoria Village Incident

Deoria
A youth in Gobarai village, Deoria, was assaulted with a belt and slippers and forced to lick spit, police said on Monday. The incident, involving four men, was recorded and circulated on social media since Sunday evening. The victim's mother also alleged that the group later attacked her home, attempting to break a door and throwing stones. Police have detained one man and said the remaining accused will be arrested soon as investigation continues.

Hoax Bomb Threat Sparks Security Checks In Kerala

Thiruvananthapuram
Security checks were conducted at Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan's official residence, Cliff House, and a private bank in Palayam on Monday after an email claimed bombs were planted at both places. A dog squad and bomb detection team were deployed. The threat was later confirmed as a hoax. Police said similar emails, often referencing Tamil Nadu political matters, have been received before. A case has been registered, and investigation is ongoing, though tracing the sender is challenging due to dark web usage.

Treasury Benches Object Kharge Mentioning Dhankhar Exit

Rajya Sabha saw tension as Kharge referred to Dhankhar's exit

Continued from page 1

A brief uproar occurred in the Rajya Sabha on Monday when Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge mentioned the "unexpected and sudden exit" of former Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar. The disruption happened while the House welcomed his successor, CP Radhakrishnan, who took charge as the new Chairman.

Speaking on behalf of opposition parties, Kharge welcomed Radhakrishnan and recalled Prime Minister Narendra Modi's statement at the start of the Winter Session. He emphasized that the Congress stands by constitutional values and parliamentary traditions. Kharge added that fair and impartial conduct in Parliament is essential for the credibility of the Chairman's office.

Referring to Dhankhar's resignation on July 21 due to health issues, Kharge said, "I am constrained to refer to your predecessor's sudden exit, which is unprecedented in parliamentary history." He also expressed regret that the House did not get a chance to bid Dhankhar farewell. Kharge highlighted Radhakrishnan's ties to former Congress MP CK Kuppuswamy and advised the new Chairman to maintain balance between both sides.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju criticized Kharge for raising Dhankhar's resignation during the ceremonial occasion. He called the remarks unnecessary and highlighted past motions against Dhankhar filed by the opposition. Leader of the House JP Nadda urged members to maintain decorum and not let election defeats influence debates.

Prime Minister Modi said Parliament is for delivering results, not political drama. He noted the opposition's frustration after Bihar and Haryana election losses and reminded members that defeat should not lead to disruption, nor victory to arrogance.

Jaishankar Highlights India's Role in BWC Implementation

NEW DELHI

EAM Jaishankar underscores India's commitment to strengthen global biosecurity at BWC 50th anniversary conference

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Monday addressed the inaugural session of the conference marking "50 Years of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC): Strengthening Biosecurity for the Global South." Speaking to experts and representatives from over 80 countries, he emphasised India's commitment to full and effective implementation of the Convention and its leadership role in global biosecurity.

Jaishankar highlighted the importance of modernising the BWC and the crucial role of the Global South in shaping its future. He outlined India's record in non-proliferation of sensitive and dual-use goods and technologies and cited the "Vaccine Maitri" initiative during the COVID-19 pandemic as an example of responsible biosecurity leadership. He also proposed a National Implementation Framework covering the identification of high-risk agents, oversight of dual-use research, domestic reporting, incident management, and continuous training.

The External Affairs Minister noted that the BWC currently lacks institutional structures such as a compliance system, permanent technical body, or a mechanism to track new scientific developments. He stressed the need for stronger compliance measures, global cooperation, and building capacity in the Global South to prepare for emerging biological threats, which move quickly, cross borders, and overwhelm systems.

In a post on X, Jaishankar emphasised that the BWC should act as a guardrail between innovation and misuse in life sciences amid a challenging international security environment. He urged the Global South to take ownership of the next 50 years of the Convention, noting that the region stands to gain the most from stronger biosecurity and has the greatest potential to contribute.

The Ministry of External Affairs said the two-day international conference at Sushma Swaraj Bhawan will include participation from regional and international organisations, further reinforcing India's commitment to disarmament, non-proliferation, and global biosecurity.

Annual India-Maldives exercise EKUVERIN will focus on counter-terror operations

14th India-Maldives Exercise EKUVERIN to Begin Today

KERALA

The 14th edition of the annual bilateral exercise EKUVERIN between India and the Maldives is scheduled to be held in Thiruvananthapuram from December 2 to 15, the Indian Army announced. The exercise will involve the Indian Army and the Maldives National Defence Forces, focusing on enhancing interoperability while conducting counterinsurgency and counter-terrorism operations in semi-urban, jungle, and coastal terrains.

A post on X highlighted that the exercise will integrate niche technology to improve coordination and efficiency between the two forces. Participants will also share best practices, reflecting India and Maldives' shared commitment to peace, security, and stability in the region. EKUVERIN further aims to deepen defence cooperation, camaraderie, and mutual trust between both armies.

"Ekuverin," meaning "Friends," is an annual bilateral exercise conducted alternately in India and the Maldives. It is one of the three major joint exercises, alongside the bilateral "Ekatha" and the trilateral "Dosti," which includes Sri Lanka. Dates and arrangements for these exercises are decided in mutual consultations.

India and Maldives share long-standing ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious, and commercial ties. India was among the first countries to recognize Maldives' independence in 1965 and to establish diplomatic relations. The strategic importance of India's role in Maldives is widely acknowledged, with India seen as a key security provider in the region.

Both nations play a critical role in maintaining safety and security in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). This partnership aligns with India's "Neighbourhood First" policy and the SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) vision, aimed at promoting stability, security, and prosperity in the IOR. The EKUVERIN exercise underlines the strong defence and strategic ties between India and Maldives.

Delhi High Court Seeks Centre's Reply on Apple Plea

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Monday sought responses from the Centre and the Competition Commission of India (CCI) to Apple Inc.'s petition challenging the CCI's directive to submit several years of audited financial statements. Apple also contested an amendment to the Competition Act, 2002, which permits penalties based on a company's global turnover.

A Bench of Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela asked the authorities to reply within a week. Apple argued that penalties should be tied only to the turnover of the relevant product in India, noting that a 10 percent penalty on its global turnover for 2022–24 could reach USD 38 billion.

The Court questioned the basis for using global turnover, while CCI counsel Balbir Singh said the rule ensures accountability for companies without an Indian base.

BJP Seeks CBI Probe into Sabarimala Temple Gold Loss

KOCHI

BJP Kerala state president Rajeev Chandrasekhar has moved the Kerala High Court, seeking a CBI investigation into the alleged loss of gold from the Sabarimala temple. In his petition, he argued that a central agency was essential for a thorough inquiry, as the gold was reportedly distributed across multiple states and involved individuals outside Kerala.

Chandrasekhar alleged that the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) was influenced by political appointees of the ruling party and that external individuals with power benefited from the gold distribution. He raised concerns over the effectiveness of the Special Investigation Team (SIT), set up by the High Court, saying the SIT might be unable to investigate members of the Board who were appointed by the government.

The BJP leader also cited media reports claiming that the son of a former TDB member, an IPS officer, was allegedly trying to obstruct the probe. He requested a detailed audit of TDB assets alongside the CBI investigation.

A Division Bench of Justices Raja Vijayaraghavan and K V Jayakumar heard the matter on Monday. The court noted certain defects in the petition and will review it again next week.

Meanwhile, former TDB president A Padmakumar, arrested by the SIT, approached the Kollam Vigilance Court seeking bail. He claimed the decision to hand over gold-clad temple items to the prime accused, Unnikrishnan Potty, was collective, yet only he was booked. His bail plea will be heard Tuesday.

The SIT is investigating two cases concerning the loss of gold from the temple's 'dwarapalakas' and the sanctum door frame. Six people have been arrested, and the High Court will review the probe's progress on Wednesday.

Supreme Court Questions Farmers' Role in Delhi Pollution Crisis

AMRITSAR

The Supreme Court on Monday questioned whether stubble burning by farmers is the sole cause of Delhi's worsening air pollution. A Bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi sought a report on measures taken to curb other major pollutants affecting air quality. CJI Kant noted that it is "easy to blame farmers" who are not represented before the Court and pointed out that stubble burning has occurred for years without causing the drastic decline now seen.

The Court stressed that Delhi-NCR's pollution cannot be viewed as a routine winter issue and directed authorities to review the situation twice a month to identify both short-term and long-term solutions. Highlighting unplanned urban expansion and rising population, CJI Kant said cities were not built to handle such density or vehicle numbers. The Bench called for scientific analysis to pinpoint primary pollution sources and urged immediate, actionable measures rather than policies that exist only on paper.

NC's Ramzan Highlights Limited J&K Govt Powers

NEW DELHI

Chowdry Mohammed Ramzan, newly elected National Conference (NC) Rajya Sabha member, on Monday highlighted the limited powers of Jammu and Kashmir's elected government, saying authority primarily rests with Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha. Ramzan made the remarks in his maiden speech after taking oath as a member of the Upper House, along with NC leaders Sajjad Ahmed Kichloo and party treasurer Gurwinder Singh Oberoi, also known as Shammi. Oberoi is the first Sikh from Kashmir to be elected to the Rajya Sabha.

The three NC leaders, along with BJP's Sat Sharma, were elected last month in the first Rajya Sabha election in Jammu and Kashmir since its bifurcation in 2019, filling seats that had been vacant since 2021.

During his speech, amid interruptions, Ramzan noted that the people had given a two-thirds majority to NC, paving the way for a popular government led by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah. Expressing dissatisfaction over the limited powers of the elected government, he said, "All the power is in the hands of LG. Orders flow from there."

While felicitating Vice President CP Radhakrishnan as Rajya Sabha Chairman, Ramzan raised concerns about J&K governance, stressing its strategic importance. Despite the Chairman's intervention, he highlighted the powerless elected government. His maiden speech earned praise from CM Omar Abdullah and NC chief Farooq Abdullah. The new MPs took oaths in Kashmiri, Urdu, and Punjabi, pledging committed service to the people.

Udhayanidhi Alleges Sengottaiyan Joined TVK Following Shah

ERODE

Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin took a veiled dig at expelled AIADMK leader K A Sengottaiyan, claiming he joined actor Vijay-led Tamizhaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) on the "advice" of Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Speaking at Pudhiya Dravida Kazhagam's 6th State Conference here, Udhayanidhi also criticized AIADMK leaders, alleging they had abandoned Dravidian ideology and were functioning as "slaves" of the BJP in Delhi. Without naming Sengottaiyan directly, he said a senior former AIADMK minister from Erode traveled to Delhi, met Shah, and returned to join another party following Shah's guidance.

"Even former AIADMK ministers today join parties only after taking permission from the BJP," Udhayanidhi said, suggesting that the party's decisions were increasingly controlled by Shah. He alleged that AIADMK chief Edappadi K Palaniswami and other leaders often queue up outside Shah's residence, competing for the "best slave" title.

Udhayanidhi claimed that in Tamil Nadu, for many parties including the AIADMK, the head office is now Shah's house in Delhi. He also referred to media reports showing Palaniswami changing several cars to meet Shah a few months ago.

Sengottaiyan recently resigned as a legislator, having represented Gobichettipalayam in Erode. His exit from the AIADMK and subsequent move to TVK has added to the perception of BJP influence over regional parties.

The DMK leader's remarks reflect ongoing tensions between AIADMK factions and the growing role of national leaders in shaping state-level politics.

VOTER LIST

EC Rejects West Bengal Voter Deletion Claims

NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) on Monday rejected allegations of "large scale voter deletion" in West Bengal, terming them false and politically motivated. The EC told the Supreme Court that the claims are being used as a "narrative" in media to gain political mileage.

The statement came in response to a plea filed by TMC MP Dola Sen regarding the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. The poll body clarified that voter list revision is a constitutional, regular, and necessary process.

Meanwhile, in WB, a section of Booth Level Officers (BLOs) involved in the SIR process held a massive protest outside the Chief Electoral Officer's (CEO) office on Monday. They complained about excessive workload during the enumeration exercise, leading authorities to increase police presence at the site.

During the demonstration, protesters raised slogans and tried to breach police barricades. The protest coincided with a visit by a BJP delegation led by Leader of Opposition Suvendu Adhikari, who met election officials at the CEO's office.

The BJP, alleging irregularities in the ongoing SIR process, demanded an audit of all 1.25 crore entries made between November 26 and 28. Adhikari claimed that political consultancy agency I-PAC was interfering in data entry and accused Kolkata Police of acting in a partisan manner. The BJP also sought more time for BLOs to complete the revision work.

The EC, however, maintained that the voter list update is conducted regularly across states and dismissed the allegations as an attempt to further vested political interests.

QUICK READ

Telangana CM to Kick Off Match with Messi

Hyderabad

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy is set to kick off a friendly football match with Argentine superstar Lionel Messi on December 13 at Uppal Stadium. The event is part of the Congress government's second-anniversary celebrations, running from December 1 to 13. An avid football player, Reddy practised recently for the match. During the celebrations, the government will also release the Telangana Rising Vision Document 2047, and Reddy will invite top leaders to the Telangana Rising Global Summit.

Centre Defends Mining Exemptions amid Tamil Nadu Opposition

New Delhi

The Centre defended its decision to exempt critical, strategic, and atomic mineral mining projects from public consultation, saying it will not affect environmental, social, health, or livelihood concerns. This came after Tamil Nadu sent a letter on September 12 urging the withdrawal of the September 8 office memorandum granting the exemption. Union Minister of State for Environment Kirti Vardhan Singh provided the reply in Lok Sabha on Monday, stressing the exemptions are necessary for strategic development.

All Causes of Air India Crash under Investigation

New Delhi

The civil aviation ministry said on Monday that all probable causes of the Air India plane crash in Ahmedabad in June are being investigated. The preliminary report by the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) contains factual information based on available evidence. The Boeing 787-8 aircraft operating flight AI171 crashed soon after takeoff on June 12, killing 260 people, including passengers and crew, with only one survivor. Some concerns have been raised about the probe in certain quarters.

BJP urges Tamil Nadu to join PM Modi's Tamil initiative

BJP asks Tamil Nadu to actively support learning Tamil language

CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Monday urged Chief Minister M.K. Stalin to support Prime Minister Narendra Modi's nationwide initiative to promote Tamil learning. The party also called for Tamil Nadu's active participation in the fourth Kashi Tamil Sangamam starting December 2 in Varanasi.

BJP State Spokesperson A.N.S. Prasad said PM Modi's vision encourages every citizen of India to learn Tamil and should be embraced by people in Tamil Nadu. He referred to the latest edition of PM Modi's monthly radio programme, 'Mann Ki Baat', where the Prime Minister invited citizens from across India to attend the Sangamam, describing it as a "beautiful confluence" of Tamil, one of the world's oldest languages, and Kashi, one of the oldest cities.

The core theme of the festival, 'Tamil Karkkalam' (Let us learn Tamil), highlights language learning and cultural pride. Prasad urged the Tamil Nadu government to send a team of Tamil scholars and experts to the event. He also requested initiatives within the state to make Tamil learning accessible to non-Tamil speaking residents.

Prasad further mentioned other points from 'Mann Ki Baat', including the role of youth in nation-building, India's space achievements, and Gen-Z innovators who developed drones capable of navigating Mars-like environments under ISRO competitions.

He proposed that the Tamil Nadu government work with the Union Government to set up a state-of-the-art Drone Technology Park. Such a facility, he said, would promote youth talent and strengthen the state's contribution to India's technological progress.

"The BJP is ready to cooperate with the Tamil Nadu government for progress and technological advancement," Prasad added.

Enforcement Directorate seizes 19 Goa properties in money-laundering case

ED Attaches Properties Worth over Rs 1,268 Crore in Goa

PANAJI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has provisionally attached 19 immovable properties in prime locations across Goa, including Anjuna, Assagaon, and Ucassaim, valued at approximately Rs 1,268.63 crore. The move, carried out on November 27 under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, targets a group allegedly involved in large-scale land fraud.

According to the ED, the properties were illegally acquired by a group led by Shivshankar Mayekar using forged and fabricated land documents, including allotment certificates, demarcation certificates, historical sale deeds, and gift deeds. Earlier, on September 9 and 10, the agency had seized and frozen bank accounts and assets worth Rs 12.85 crore in connection with the same investigation.

The money-laundering probe follows an FIR filed by Goa Police against Yeshwant Sawant and others for allegedly defrauding the Communidade of Anjuna related to Survey No. 496/1-A. The accused reportedly used fake documents to secure fraudulent mutation of land, selling portions to third parties to generate proceeds of crime.

The ED identified Mayekar as the main conspirator. He allegedly acquired multiple land parcels across Goa in the names of relatives and associates and was arrested on October 1; he remains in judicial custody. The investigation has also uncovered four additional FIRs involving illegal land acquisitions in Anjuna and Assagaon, with several other parcels suspected to have been obtained fraudulently.

The inquiry revealed a systematic modus operandi: identifying undervalued land, fabricating title documents, creating fake certificates, mutating properties in frontmen's names, and selling the land for criminal proceeds. Information about these properties is being shared with enforcement agencies under PMLA coordination. The ED said further investigation is ongoing.

Abhishek Banerjee Open To Contest from Any Seat

DIAMOND HARBOUR

Senior TMC leader Abhishek Banerjee on Monday dismissed speculation about contesting from Nandigram, saying he will contest from "any seat" the party assigns, including Darjeeling. Speaking in Maheshtala, he termed the buzz a "manufactured flutter" and stressed party discipline. His remarks followed Union Minister Sukanta Majumdar's claim that Banerjee was preparing to enter Nandigram. Suvendu Adhikari responded that "nobody in Nandigram will vote for him," while the TMC cited its strong grassroots support. Nandigram remains politically symbolic after Mamata Banerjee's narrow 2021 loss. Banerjee reiterated that he has no personal preference and that candidate decisions rest solely with the party.

MP Minister Introduces Municipal Amendment Bill

Madhya Pradesh Minister presents Municipal Amendment Bill in Assembly; debate scheduled for tomorrow amid opposition protests over recent tragedies and administrative issues

BHOPAL

Madhya Pradesh Urban Affairs and Housing Minister Kailash Vijayvargiya on Monday introduced the 'Municipal (Amendment) Bill' in the state Assembly. The Winter session of the Assembly began on the same day, with the Bill's discussion scheduled for Tuesday, according to Assembly Speaker Narendra Tomar.

Vijayvargiya, who also serves as the state Parliamentary Affairs Minister, provided a brief introduction to the Bill in the House. The legislation seeks to restore direct elections for the posts of Chairperson of Nagar Palika and Nagar Parishad. The Madhya Pradesh Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, had approved the proposal last week.

Historically, from 1999 to 2014, elections for these municipal posts were held directly by voters. However, in 2022, these elections were conducted through an indirect system, where elected ward councillors cast votes. The election of Mayors, however, has continued to follow the direct voting system.

The Assembly session began with opposition protests highlighting two major incidents. Members of the Congress party raised concerns over the Coldrif cough syrup tragedy that claimed more than 25 children in Chhindwara and other districts. They also questioned the ruling BJP on the M.Y. Hospital case, where two children had died a few months ago.

Some Congress MLAs, including Jaivardhan Singh, alleged that the Assembly secretariat alerted the government about questions submitted in the House. Responding to the allegation, Minister Vijayvargiya remarked that Congress MLAs need training for framing questions and urged them to keep questions concise for proper answers.

The session promises lively discussions as the Municipal Amendment Bill and opposition concerns are expected to dominate the House proceedings on Tuesday.

Gujarat Completes Major Voter Roll Revision Exercise

AHMEDABAD

Gujarat is nearing the final stages of its 2025 special intensive electoral roll revision, with the enumeration phase continuing until December 11. Under the guidance of the Election Commission of India and Chief Electoral Officer Hareet Shukla, the CEO office, in coordination with district election officers, has accelerated the process to meet deadlines.

Over 5 crore registered voters have already received their enumeration forms, with most of the state's 33 districts achieving full distribution. Officials said the remaining districts will soon meet the target. The returned forms are being rapidly digitised, showing remarkable progress on the ground.

Two Assembly constituencies, Dhanera in Banaskantha and Limkheda in Dahod, have completed 100 per cent digitisation of received forms, a rare achievement. Among districts, Dang leads with 93.14 per cent digitisation, followed by Gir Somnath (88.91 per cent), Banaskantha (88.42 per cent), Sabarkantha (88.32 per cent), and Morbi (88 per cent). Other top performers include Mahisagar, Chhota Udepur, Panchmahal, Patan, and Surendranagar, all above 86 per cent.

The exercise has revealed important updates in the voter database. Around 15.58 lakh deceased individuals were still listed, over 4 lakh voters were absent at registered addresses, and 21.86 lakh people had permanently migrated. Additionally, more than 2.68 lakh duplicate entries were detected.

The CEO office praised Gujarat's BLOs for their field efforts in driving the revision efficiently and advised them to contact local election offices for operational support. The initiative marks one of the most extensive voter roll clean-up drives in the state, ensuring accuracy and integrity ahead of upcoming elections.

'Sardar Patel Would Have Ensured Complete Kashmir Integration'

SRINAGAR

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday said that Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel would have ensured complete and irreversible integration of the Union Territory if he had been in charge of its affairs in 1947.

The L-G participated in the "Sardar150 Unity March (Padyatra)" at Vadodara in Gujarat. The national march, which started from Sardar Patel's family home in Karamsad, will cover nearly 190 km over 11 days and conclude at the Statue of Unity on December 6.

Addressing the event on the theme "Kashmir, Hyderabad and Sardar," Sinha said that although Patel did not directly handle Jammu and Kashmir, he ensured it remained an integral part of India. "History of Jammu and Kashmir would have been different if Sardar Patel had been given full responsibility for its integration," he added.

The L-G highlighted Patel's opposition to the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's approach and his resistance to taking the issue to the United Nations. He recalled Patel's public statements advocating complete integration and decisive action to protect the region from Pakistan.

Sinha emphasized that Patel's vision of unity, equality, and social justice continues to shape India's growth. "As an architect of modern India, Patel symbolizes self-confidence, self-respect, and bravery," he said.

He also noted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is fulfilling Patel's vision through initiatives like the abrogation of Article 370, 'One Nation, One Tax', 'One Nation, One Ration Card', 'PM Gati Shakti', and the Kashi-Tamil Sangamam.

The L-G urged the youth to uphold the pillars of unity, which he identified as shared values, shared identity, and a common purpose, driving India's progress and development.

Punjab CM Mann to Visit Japan, South Korea Seeking Investments

CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann will lead a high-level delegation to Japan and South Korea to promote investment ahead of the Sixth Progressive Punjab Investors' Summit scheduled from March 13-15 at the ISB campus in Mohali.

The delegation, including Industries and Commerce Minister Sanjeev Arora, officials, and the Invest Punjab team, will visit Tokyo on December 2-3, Osaka on December 4-5, and Seoul on December 8-9. The visits aim to strengthen economic partnerships, interact with global companies, and extend personal invitations for the upcoming summit, the state government said.

The roadshows and meetings are being organised in coordination with the Indian Embassies in Japan and South Korea, the Ministry of External Affairs, DPIIT's Invest India, and the respective foreign missions.

During the visit, Punjab will showcase its advantages as North India's preferred investment destination, highlighting strategic location, strong industrial clusters, seamless connectivity to NCR and ports, skilled workforce, uninterrupted power supply, and progressive policy ecosystem. Officials will also present governance reforms, including the FastTrack Punjab single-window system offering over 173 G2B services, auto-deemed approvals, PAN-based business identifiers, and amendments to the Punjab Right to Business Act enabling time-bound approvals.

The delegation will highlight industrial infrastructure such as plug-and-play parks and the upcoming Integrated Manufacturing Cluster in Rajpura, noting that over Rs 1.4 lakh crore of on-ground investments have been facilitated through Invest Punjab.

TOILET AWARENESS DRIVE

Gujarat Launches Drive to Improve Village Toilets

AHMEDABAD

Gujarat marked World Toilet Day with a strong push for hygiene and toilet maintenance across villages. Under the 'Hamara Shauchalay, Hamara Bhavishya' campaign of the Swachh Bharat Mission–Gramin, community and household toilets were repaired, cleaned, and refurbished, while awareness activities highlighted proper sanitation practices.

Villages carried out deep cleaning, repainted toilets, and fixed broken doors, taps, tiles, and drainage systems. Officials also ensured surrounding areas were kept clean. Vibrant wall art was used to spread messages on hygiene, handwashing, and responsible toilet use.

Districts including Morbi, Valsad, Ahmedabad, and Surendranagar saw active participation from gram panchayats, sanitation committees, and local volunteers. Several villages organised cleanliness pledges, competitions, and awareness drives to educate residents on toilet upkeep and overall community hygiene.

Officials noted that World Toilet Day is a reminder of collective responsibility. "Access to toilets is vital, but maintaining them is equally important," they said, emphasising that campaigns like this renew communities' commitment to sanitation.

India has made significant progress in toilet construction over the past decade, largely due to the Swachh Bharat Mission, which aimed to end open defecation through building household and community toilets and ensuring rural and urban sanitation access.

Alongside construction, government initiatives focus on behaviour change, waste management, and upgrading sanitation infrastructure. Awareness campaigns, panchayat funding, and initiatives like 'Hamara Shauchalay, Hamara Bhavishya' continue to strengthen hygiene habits, promote sustainable toilet use, and support India's long-term goals of universal sanitation and improved public health.

Telangana CM Requests HUDCO Loans at Lower Rates

HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Monday urged HUDCO Chairman Sanjay Kulshrestha to provide loans at lower interest rates for key state development projects. He sought affordable financing for Bharat Future City, the Hyderabad Metro Rail extension, the Regional Ring Road, and Radial Roads. Reddy also briefed the chairman on proposed greenfield highways connecting Bharat Future City to Chennai via Bangalore and Amaravati, a highway to Bandar Port, and a potential bullet train project.

The Chief Minister raised concerns about restructuring past loans and the high interest rates on existing borrowings. Kulshrestha responded positively, assuring efforts to address high-interest payments. He also noted that loans for Indiramma housing had been sanctioned and agreed to release funds for constructing an additional 10 lakh houses. Reddy invited him to the Telangana Rising 2047 Global Summit, stressing that competitive loan rates are crucial for accelerating the state's infrastructure and development agenda.

QUICK READ

Three Militants Killed in Failed Balochistan Attack

Karachi

Security forces stopped a major attack on the Frontier Corps (FC) headquarters in Nokundi town of Chagai district on Sunday night. Officials said three BLA militants were killed after a suicide bomber blew himself up at the main gate, trying to help others enter the campus. Six attackers tried to break in, but FC personnel quickly pushed them back. Sources said BLA militants also attacked another FC post in Panjgur, leading to a gunfight. Some attackers were believed to be killed there too.

Two Mild Quakes Hit Parts of Afghanistan

Kabul

Afghanistan recorded two mild earthquakes on Monday, according to the National Center for Seismology. The first quake, measuring 4.3, hit early in the morning at a depth of 90 km. Later, a 4.4-magnitude quake struck at a depth of 163 km. These quakes come weeks after a strong 6.3-magnitude tremor in northern Afghanistan killed 27 people and injured hundreds. Experts say the country remains highly vulnerable to earthquakes because it lies on several active fault lines. NTT Highlights New Tech at Annual R&D Forum.

NTT Highlights New Tech at Annual R&D Forum

Tokyo

NTT showcased its latest innovations under the theme "IOWN and Quantum Leap" at its annual R&D Forum. The company presented new noise-cancelling technology that predicts and reduces sound before it reaches people, helping lower hearing risks. NTT also showed a remote medical tool that lets doctors feel a patient's softness from afar. Another highlight was wireless laser power transmission, which can supply electricity to drones, remote islands, and disaster-hit areas. The event displayed NTT's growing role in future technology.

Rubio Calls Ongoing Ukraine Peace Efforts Delicate And Complex

Ukraine and US continue sensitive talks seeking stable long-term peace guarantees

KYIV

Talks between Ukraine and the United States continued this week as both sides worked on creating "reliable security guarantees" for Kyiv under a peace plan supported by Washington. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio met a Ukrainian team led by Rustem Umerov, head of Ukraine's National Security and Defence Council. Rubio said Sunday's discussions in Florida were "productive",

but warned that "more work" was still needed. He described the process as "delicate" and "complicated".

The meeting also included Witkoff and Jared Kushner, son-in-law of US President Donald Trump. Witkoff is expected to travel to Moscow on Monday for further talks with Russian officials. Rubio said the US remained "realistic" about the challenges ahead but "optimistic" because both sides shared a vision that the goal was not only to stop the war but also to secure a safer and more prosperous future for Ukraine.

Rubio said the discussions involved "many moving parts" and stressed that Russia must be part of the process. He noted the US had been in contact with Russian officials and understood their views. The talks followed a Geneva meeting where Trump's earlier peace plan was revised. Umerov said Ukraine's priorities were protecting national interests and securing real, long-term peace. The meeting also set the stage for Witkoff's talks with President Putin on issues including Donbas and Crimea.

Khaleda Zia Remains Critical As Doctors Intensify Treatment

Former Bangladesh PM Khaleda Zia faces critical health issues

DHAKA

Former Bangladesh prime minister Khaleda Zia is "extremely unwell" and has been placed on ventilation as her condition continues to worsen, senior Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) leaders said on Monday. The 80-year-old BNP chairperson was admitted to a private hospital on November 23 after developing a chest infection that affected both her lungs and heart. Doctors shifted her to the coronary care unit four days later when several health problems became more serious.

BNP Vice-Chairman Advocate Ahmed Aazam Khan told reporters that Zia's health had further deteriorated and that she had been moved to ventilation support. He described her condition as "very critical" and urged people across the country to pray for her recovery. BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir also confirmed that her condition remained unstable despite intensive care from both local and foreign medical experts.

Alamgir said specialists from Bangladesh and abroad were jointly supervising her treatment, adding that doctors were "trying their best" under difficult circumstances. BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi said Zia's condition had shown no improvement.

Zia, the widow of former Bangladesh president Ziaur Rahman, has long suffered from multiple health issues, including liver and kidney complications, diabetes, arthritis, and eye-related illnesses. Earlier this year, she returned from London on May 6 after four months of medical treatment.

Her only surviving son, Tarique Rahman, BNP's acting chairman, has lived in London since 2008. Her younger son, Arafat Rahman, died of cardiac arrest in 2025. BNP has recently regained political prominence following a student-led uprising that toppled Sheikh Hasina's government in August 2024.

Pak Failed To Build Friendship With Afghan: Cleric

KABUL

Senior Pakistani cleric and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) chief Fazlur Rehman has sharply criticised Islamabad's long-standing policy towards Afghanistan, saying it has "completely failed" as tensions between the two neighbours continue to grow. Speaking at a gathering in Mardan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, he said Pakistan had not been able to win Afghanistan's trust in 78 years and only relied on conflict instead of dialogue. He was quoted by Afghan outlet Amu TV as saying, "In 78 years, Pakistan has not been able to make Afghanistan its friend. You only know war. You cannot solve this problem." Rehman urged the Pakistani government to review its regional strategy and work towards peace and mutual trust.

Hasina, Relatives Get Jail Terms In Major B'desh Land Scam

DHAKA

A Bangladesh court on Monday sentenced former prime minister Sheikh Hasina to five years in jail in a major land scam case. Her niece, British MP Tulip Siddiq, received a two-year jail term. The verdict was delivered by Judge Md Rabiul Alam of Dhaka's Special Judge's Court-4.

The judge also sentenced Hasina's sister, Sheikh Rehana, to seven years in jail. Fourteen other accused were given five-year jail terms. All 17 convicted individuals were fined Tk 1 lakh each. If they fail to pay, they must spend six more months in jail.

This is the fourth corruption verdict against the 78-year-old former leader. Siddiq, a British-Bangladeshi Labour Party MP since 2015, is Rehana's daughter. An arrest warrant was issued for her in April as part of the investigation into corruption during Hasina's rule.

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed the land scam case on January 13, accusing Hasina, Rehana, Siddiq and others of unlawfully taking plots during Hasina's tenure. A charge sheet against 17 people was submitted on March 10.

The ACC filed six separate cases between January 12 and 14 over irregularities in the Purbachal New Town project. The ACC said Hasina, in collusion with senior Rajuk officials, illegally secured six large plots in the diplomatic zone for herself and close family members, even though they did not qualify under the rules.

Charges in related cases were framed on July 31. Last week, Hasina received 21 years of rigorous imprisonment in three other Purbachal plot cases. She has been in India since August 5 last year after protests toppled her government.

Afghan Journos Say Pak No Longer Safe Refuge

KABUL

The Afghanistan Media Support Organisation (AMSO) has strongly criticised Pakistan for increasing arrests, harassment and forced deportations of Afghan journalists, saying the country has become a place of "uncertainty and fear" instead of a safe refuge. The concern follows the arrest of Afghan journalist Hamoon Khamosh and his family in Islamabad, with AMSO warning he could be deported back to Afghanistan, where journalists face severe restrictions and intimidation.

AMSO said that in the past month alone, six Afghan journalists have been arrested and deported by Pakistani authorities. These journalists had earlier fled Afghanistan due to censorship, political pressure and direct security threats, hoping Pakistan would be a temporary safe haven. However, AMSO noted that Afghan journalists now live in conditions where their safety and dignity are at serious risk. Press freedom groups have urged Pakistan to stop deportations and restore visa services, stressing that forced returns could put journalists' lives in grave danger. Reports indicate that Afghan refugees in Pakistan are facing increasing pressure from police amid rising tensions between Islamabad and the Taliban administration.

Residents Decry Mafia Destroying Indus Riverine Wildlife, Grazing Zones

DERA GHAZI KHAN

Local communities in Dera Ghazi Khan have raised serious concerns over what they describe as "mafia-led" destruction of the Indus River's natural riverine zones. They allege that brick kiln operators are clearing large stretches of natural vegetation for fuel, endangering wildlife habitats and traditional grazing areas. Residents say that during summer, the River Indus can expand up to 15–20 kilometres, allowing thick wild grasses, shrubs, reeds and native plants to flourish naturally across its floodplains.

India Leads Major Rescue Effort In Sri Lanka

COLOMBO

India has launched a large and urgent rescue operation in Sri Lanka after Cyclone Ditwah caused widespread destruction, severe floods, and heavy loss of life. Under Operation Sagar Bandhu, teams from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and the Indian Air Force (IAF) have been working across several affected districts to save lives, move people to safety, and provide medical help.

MEA Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal shared regular updates, saying NDRF teams carried out rescue work in Kochikade, Puttalam, and Badulla. He added that IAF Mi-17 helicopters evacuated 34 people, including children, from Kotmale to Colombo. The helicopters also delivered medical supplies and food packets to stranded families.

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said another IAF aircraft landed in Colombo on Sunday carrying disaster response materials. The IAF confirmed that a C-17 aircraft transported more than 80 NDRF personnel, 8 tonnes of equipment, and 21 tonnes of relief material from Pune to Sri Lanka. This included medicines, emergency kits, food items, and essential rescue gear.

India's NDRF and Air Force are carrying out large rescue, relief, and medical missions across Sri Lanka after Cyclone Ditwah caused massive destruction and heavy loss of life.

Officials said Operation Sagar Bandhu highlights India's strong support for Sri Lanka during a major crisis. The rescue missions have been conducted quickly and efficiently, despite difficult weather and ground conditions. The coordinated efforts of NDRF and the IAF show India's readiness to help its neighbour during emergencies.

According to Sri Lanka's Disaster Management Centre, at least 334 people have died and 370 remain missing after the cyclone, making it one of the worst disasters the island nation has faced in recent years.

India has said it will continue assisting Sri Lanka until the situation stabilises and all affected communities receive the help they need.

Sri Lankan Minister Thanks India For Strong Disaster Support

BADULLA: Sri Lanka's Deputy Tourism Minister Ruwan Ranasinghe on Monday thanked India and the NDRF for their help after Cyclone Ditwah caused severe damage. The Indian High Commission said NDRF teams, including landslide experts, are working closely with local authorities in Badulla to recover victims and provide essential aid. India also sent 12 tonnes of relief materials to Trincomalee through INS Sukanya. IAF MI-17 helicopters continue rescuing stranded people and delivering urgent supplies. Cyclone Ditwah, now weakening, has left 355 dead and 366 missing across Sri Lanka.

Suicide Blast Kills Policeman, Injures Three In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

ISLAMABAD

A police officer was killed and three others were injured on Monday in a suicide blast targeting a security vehicle in Lakki Marwat district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Officials said the attack took place when a Tajori police mobile came under assault. The deceased officer was identified as head constable Alauddin.

According to Asif Hassan, spokesperson for the Lakki Marwat District Police Officer, the suicide bomber died on the spot while his accomplice managed to escape. A search operation has been launched to track down the suspect.

Pakistan has seen a sharp rise in terror attacks over the past year, especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, after the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) ended its ceasefire with the government in November 2022.

Recent incidents highlight the worsening situation. On November 24, armed attackers targeted a security forces vehicle in the Bannu district, injuring a soldier who was rushed to a military hospital. Security forces later carried out a joint operation and claimed to have killed and injured several militants.

Earlier, on November 8, a police officer named Azad Khan was injured when unidentified assailants fired at a checkpost in Khar tehsil's Tangi area. Police said the shot came from an unknown location.

SUDOKU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

	5		9		4		3	6
	2		1		8		7	
8	6		3	5			4	
	9			7	1		5	
5		1	6		9		2	
6			2		5	1		4
7		2	5		6		1	9
	3	5		1	2	4		
4			7		3	5	8	

9	6	3	1	7	8	5	4	2
1	8	5	4	3	2	6	9	7
4	2	7	6	9	5	1	3	8
5	7	9	2	1	3	8	6	4
6	1	8	5	4	9	7	2	3
3	4	2	7	8	6	9	5	1
7	5	6	8	2	4	3	1	9
8	3	4	9	5	1	2	7	6
2	9	1	3	6	7	4	8	5

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

Fill a 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3×3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9.

MONGOLIA HIV UPDATE

Mongolia Reports Rising HIV Cases This Year

ULAN BATOR

Mongolia now has 424 people living with HIV or AIDS, according to the National Center for Communicable Diseases (NCCD). In a statement released for World AIDS Day on December 1, the NCCD said 36 new HIV cases were recorded in the first eleven months of 2025. Most patients are between 20 and 44 years old, and 99.7 per cent of infections were caused by sexual transmission.

Mongolia recorded its first HIV case in 1992. Since then, 71 people have died of AIDS in the country, which has a population of 3.5 million. Health officials say awareness and early testing are important to control the spread.

According to the World Health Organization, HIV weakens the body by attacking white blood cells. This makes it easier for a person to suffer from diseases such as tuberculosis, infections, and certain cancers. AIDS is the most advanced stage of HIV infection.

HIV spreads through body fluids like blood, semen, vaginal fluids, and breast milk. It can also pass from an infected mother to her baby during pregnancy or childbirth. However, HIV does not spread through hugging, kissing, shaking hands, or sharing food and water.

Health experts say HIV can be prevented and managed with antiretroviral therapy (ART). Without treatment, HIV may progress to AIDS after several years. Many people do not know they are infected because early symptoms may be mild or similar to the flu, such as fever, headache, rash, or sore throat. Regular testing and safe practices remain key to prevention.

QUICK READ

Hyundai, Kia see November sales dip globally

Seoul

Hyundai Motor and Kia reported lower global sales in November as weak demand hit both domestic and overseas markets. Hyundai's sales dropped 2.4% to 349,507 units, with both local and international numbers slipping. Kia saw a smaller decline of 0.8%, selling 262,065 vehicles. Despite the slowdown, both companies said they plan to strengthen sales strategies by boosting hybrid and electric vehicle offerings. Hyundai will also focus on new model launches, while Kia aims to grow through its eco-friendly SUV and EV lineup. Kia's cumulative Jan-uary–November sales, however, rose 1.8%, showing steady long-term demand.

Maruti Reports strong 26% sales jump in November

New Delhi

Maruti Suzuki India posted a strong 26% rise in total sales for November, touching 2,29,021 units. The company had sold 1,81,531 units in the same month last year. Domestic passenger vehicle dispatches also climbed sharply to 1,70,971 units, up 21% from 1,41,312 units a year ago. Maruti said demand remained steady across key segments, helping boost overall numbers.

Tata Motors posts strong 26% sales growth

New Delhi

Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles reported a solid rise in November sales, touching 59,199 units, a 26 per cent jump from last year's 47,117 units. The company said domestic sales also grew well, reaching 57,436 units, up 22 per cent compared to 47,063 units in the same month last year. Officials noted that demand for new models and steady interest in the SUV segment helped push overall numbers. With this growth, Tata Motors continues to strengthen its presence in the compet-itive passenger vehicle market, giving the company a strong start as the year moves toward its close.

FM ON LIC'S INDEPENDENT INVESTMENT DECISIONS

LIC invests in top NSE and BSE companies, with ₹4,30,776.97 cr in Nifty 50 equities

Continued from page 1

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman told Parliament on Monday that the Finance Ministry does not issue any advice or instructions to the Life Insurance Corpora-tion of India (LIC) regarding how it should invest its funds. In her written reply to the Lok Sabha, she said that LIC makes all investment decisions on its own after following strict checks, risk reviews, and legal requirements.

She explained that LIC's investment practices are guided by the Insurance Act, 1938, along with regulations issued by IRDAI, the RBI, and SEBI. These rules en-sure that LIC applies strong financial discipline and maintains the highest stand-ards of responsibility while managing policyholders' money.

According to the minister, LIC mostly invests in the top 500 companies listed on the NSE and BSE. A large share of its funds is placed in the biggest and most stable companies among these. As of September 30, 2025, LIC's investment in Nifty 50 companies stood at Rs 4,30,776.97 crore, making up 45.85 per cent of its total equity investment.

All investment activities of LIC are closely checked by multiple layers of scrutiny. These include concurrent auditors, statutory auditors, system auditors, IFC audi-tors, and the corporation's internal vigilance mechanisms. The IRDAI also con-ducts periodic inspections to ensure that LIC continues to follow all required standards. The minister stressed that there is no direct government oversight on LIC's investment choices.

Sitharaman also shared company-wise details of LIC's holdings. LIC's investment in Adani Group companies totals Rs 38,658.85 crore, including stakes in ACC Ltd and Ambuja Cements. Its largest private-sector holding is in Reliance Industries at Rs 40,901.38 crore, followed by Infosys, TCS, HDFC Bank, and Hindustan Uni-lever. LIC also invests heavily in major public sector companies such as SBI, Coal India, ONGC, PNB, and GIC.

HSBC predicts RBI to reduce repo rate

The report warns growth may slow in March 2026 as fiscal support eases and exports decline, prompting HSBC to expect RBI to start easing policy rates December

NEW DELHI

HSBC Global Investment Research has said that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is likely to reduce the policy repo rate by 25 basis points during the Monetary Poli-cy Committee (MPC) meeting on December 5. If this happens, the repo rate will fall to 5.25 per cent. The report explains that inflation is expected to stay well be-low the RBI's target for some time, giving room for a rate cut.

According to HSBC, India's economic growth has remained strong so far. Gov-ernment spending was front-loaded, and GST rate cuts helped boost retail de-mand. However, the November Flash Manufacturing PMI reading of 56.6 showed that the GST-led push may now be slowing, with new orders appearing weaker.

The report notes that while growth looks strong at the moment, it may soften in the March 2026 quarter. This could happen because the fiscal push is expected to ease and exports may slow across global markets. For these reasons, HSBC be-lieves the RBI is likely to begin easing its policy rates this December.

India's GDP numbers have also surprised on the upside. Growth for July–September stood at 8.2 per cent, higher than the previous quarter's 7.8 per cent and above HSBC's own expectation of 7.5 per cent. GVA growth was 8.1 per cent, and nominal GDP rose 8.7 per cent.

HSBC said this strong momentum is supported by two key factors. First, manufac-turers increased production ahead of GST rate cuts announced on August 15 and applied on September 22. Second, lower-income states have recently started growing faster than higher-income ones, lifting national GDP because it reflects the combined output of all states. The report adds that India's growth has stayed firm despite the 50 per cent recip-rocal tariff imposed by the US on Indian exports since August.

UPI transactions see strong rise in November

NEW DELHI

UPI transactions in India continued their strong upward trend in November, re-flecting steady consumer spending and the growing trust in digital payments. Ac-cording to data from the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), UPI rec-orded a 32 percent year-on-year rise in the number of transactions, reaching 20.47 billion for the month. The total transaction value also grew by 22 percent to Rs 26.32 lakh crore.

The average daily transaction amount stood at Rs 87,721 crore, while November saw 682 million daily transactions on average, slightly higher than October's 668 million.

Instant money transfers (IMPS) also showed healthy growth, with monthly trans-actions amounting to Rs 6.15 lakh crore—an increase of 10 percent compared to last year. IMPS transaction count touched 369 million, and average daily transfers reached Rs 20,506 crore.

In October, UPI had already recorded strong gains, with a 25 percent rise in transaction count and a 16 percent jump in value.

The OSHWC Code mandates hazard assessments, approval, uniform petroleum standards, risk-based inspections, audits & emergency systems

New labour codes strengthen safety for petroleum workers

NEW DELHI

The government has announced that the new labour codes — the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020 (OSHWC Code) and the Social Security Code, 2020 — will greatly improve safety measures and welfare support for workers in the petroleum sector. These reforms bring refineries, fuel depots, and other petroleum units under one national safety framework, making rules clearer and stronger.

Under the OSHWC Code, companies must carry out structured hazard identifica-tion and detailed risk assessments before beginning any hazardous operations. They must also secure government approval in advance. The code sets national standards for handling, storing, transporting, and disposing of petroleum materi-als, making operations safer and more uniform across the country. It also intro-duces risk-based inspections, regular safety audits, an emergency command framework, and digital compliance tools similar to those used by major global oil and gas firms.

Worker health protections have been strengthened as well. The code requires pre-employment, periodic, and post-exposure medical check-ups for all workers involved in hazardous petroleum tasks. Free annual health examinations are mandatory. In addition, only trained and certified workers may handle petroleum products or hazardous chemicals. Employers must maintain safety equipment, of-fer proper training, and follow an eight-hour shift limit to reduce fatigue, an es-sential safeguard for industries running around the clock.

The Social Security Code, 2020 expands Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) coverage to petroleum workplaces, ensuring access to medical care, injury compensation, disability and dependents' benefits, maternity support, and pro-tection from occupational diseases. Digital records make benefits easier to track and transfer.

The government says these codes mark a major shift from a reactive, compliance-heavy system to a modern, prevention-focused, technology-driven approach. The reforms aim to improve discipline, strengthen skills, enhance emergency readi-ness, simplify regulations, and build a safer environment for petroleum workers nationwide.

Mahindra reports strong 19% sales growth in November

NEW DELHI

Mahindra & Mahindra re-corded a solid 19% rise in overall sales for November, touching 92,670 units, including exports. SUV sales led the growth, with 56,336 units sold in the domestic market, up 22% from last year. Total SUV sales, includ-ing exports, reached 57,598 units. Commercial vehicle sales also grew 17% to 24,843 units. The company marked one year of its Electric Origin SUVs and launched the new XEV 9S. Three-wheeler sales rose 7%, while exports increased 5% to 2,923 units. Mahindra Last Mile Mobility also crossed a milestone by selling over 3 lakh electric commercial vehicles.

Export recovery set to boost agrochemical revenue

NEW DELHI

India's agrochemical industry is expected to see a 6–7 percent rise in revenue this fiscal year, driven mainly by a rebound in exports after two slow years, according to a new report by Crisil Ratings. The improvement comes as global demand re-covers and inventories return to normal levels, even as domestic sales remain weak due to an extended monsoon that affected kharif season buying.

Crisil said the industry could return to its long-term growth rate of 8–10 percent next year if exports maintain momentum and domestic demand strengthens. Stable raw material prices, steady realisations, and limited impact from US tariffs are expected to keep operating margins largely unchanged this year and next.

The report highlighted that over 65 percent of India's agrochemical exports go to Latin America, North America, and Europe. Latin America is growing modestly, Europe is seeing recovery after inventory correction, and the US market remains steady, with most Indian shipments exempt from tariffs.

According to Crisil Senior Director Anuj Sethi, global farm sentiment is improving, which may push export revenue up by 8–9 percent this fiscal. With Chinese sup-ply stabilising and inventory pressure easing, domestic and export prices are ex-pected to remain steady.

Pak faces rising pressure from Chinese loans

NEW DELHI

Pakistan is facing growing stress from its rising debt to China, as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) now accounts for nearly $30 billion of the country's external loans. High interest rates and repayment in foreign currency have made the burden heavier, increasing the risks linked to delays, economic problems, and political uncertainty.

CPEC began with big hopes, but progress has been slow. Out of 90 planned projects, only 38 are finished, and important sites like Gwadar Port and its airport are still operating at a limited level. This gap between grand plans and actual re-sults has raised concerns about the future of the project.

Security and public perception remain major hurdles. In

Balochistan, local groups are demanding a fairer approach that considers the needs of residents, not just large investors. Of the nine Special Economic Zones, only three show active de-velopment, while the rest remain stuck in planning. This reflects deeper institu-tional challenges and the need for stronger coordination.

Environmental pressure is also growing. Rising resource use and emissions have increased the need for better monitoring and sustainable practices, or the re-gion's ecosystems could face serious harm.

CPEC is evolving at a time when global alliances are shifting. While new partner-ships may help diversify investments, they also expose the risks of depending too heavily on a single major partner. The updated phase, known as CPEC 2.0, now focuses on industrial zones, agriculture, and mining. Launched in 2015 with $46 billion in promises, CPEC has changed from a massive transformation plan into a project adjusting to financial limits and governance challenges. Despite this, it remains strategically important, but it clearly requires flexible, careful management and balanced risk-sharing to move forward.

Odisha rising as India's strong clean energy hub

NEW DELHI

Odisha is quickly becoming one of India's most promising clean-energy destina-tions, supported by its natural advantages, forward-looking policies, and growing industrial demand, according to a new EY-Assocham report released on Monday. The state's strong solar, wind, and hydro potential, combined with a robust port ecosystem, positions it to play a major role in meeting India's 2030 clean-energy goals and long-term net-zero vision.

The report highlights that Odisha's ports, expanding industrial base, and plans for energy storage and green hydrogen give it a unique chance to attract investment. These strengths could help the state emerge as a green manufacturing hub for eastern India. Odisha's well-developed ports also create major opportunities for exporting green hydrogen and ammonia to global markets such as Japan, Korea, and the European Union.

Several leading international companies are already assessing green hydrogen and ammonia projects along the eastern coast, strengthening Odisha's position as a growing clean-energy export centre. According to EY India, the state's founda-tion for green industrialisation is powered by its port-based ecosystem at Paradeep, Dhamra, and Gopalpur, strong renewable energy potential, and support-ive state incentives. Odisha also has an impressive 34 GW pumped-storage poten-tial, which can help produce round-the-clock renewable energy and support grid stability.

The report projects that Odisha's peak electricity demand will reach 10,564 MW by FY 2033–34 due to industrial growth and rising consumption. To meet this demand, the state may need 26,237 MW of additional contracted capacity in the next decade, highlighting the need for careful planning and strong infrastructure. To manage these opportunities, the report recommends forming a dedicated State Energy Planning and Transformation Unit. This unit would focus on re-newable energy, storage, hydrogen production, ports, transmission, land man-agement, and finance.

EXPLORATION APPROVALS SIMPLIFIED

Govt eases process for coal exploration approvals

NEW DELHI

The Central government has introduced a simpler and faster system for approving exploration programmes and Geological Reports (GRs) for coal and lignite blocks. This move marks an important procedural change aimed at improving the ease of doing business in India's exploration sector and reducing unnecessary delays.

The Ministry of Coal reviewed the earlier method and created a more streamlined process for approving documents prepared by Accredited Prospecting Agencies (APAs).

These agencies are certified by QCI-NABET and must have their reports peer-reviewed by another accredited agency. Under the new rules, the approval of the committee set up in January 2022 is no longer required, which removes a major procedural layer that previously slowed down the system.

According to the ministry, the reform highlights the government's strong trust in private exploration agencies and their growing role in the sector. By allowing these private entities to use their technology, skills, and innovative approaches, the government hopes to make coal exploration faster, more efficient, and more transparent.

Officials said the new system will save at least three months in processing a Geo-logical Report. This faster approval will help coal block allottees begin operations sooner and finish important milestones on time. The change is expected to speed up exploration work, strengthen long-term resource security, and support sus-tainable use of coal and lignite reserves.

India's rising energy needs require quicker and more reliable exploration efforts. The Ministry of Coal continues to push reforms that encourage private participa-tion, boost transparency, and ensure the country remains prepared for future energy demands. The latest initiative reinforces the government's commitment to modernising the coal exploration ecosystem and supporting the broader vision of a developed and energy-secure Bharat.

ASIA'S DELUGE:
Monsoon Fury and the Path Forward

In the sweltering heat of late November 2025, as the annual monsoon season gripped South and Southeast Asia with unyielding force, the skies unleashed a tor-rent unlike any in recent memory. Torrential rains, swollen rivers, and cascading landslides transformed vibrant communities into scenes of unimaginable devasta-tion. From the bustling streets of Colombo in Sri Lanka to the misty highlands of Sumatra in Indonesia, and the coastal lowlands of southern Thailand, floodwaters surged with ferocious speed, claiming over 1,000 lives and displacing millions. This was no ordinary monsoon; it was a harbinger of a climate-altered future, where extreme weather events, intensified by human-induced warming, strike with greater ferocity and frequency. As rescue teams wade through knee-deep mud and families cling to rooftops awaiting helicopters, the question echoes across the region: How did we arrive here, and what must we do to endure what comes next?

The 2024-2025 floods, triggered by a rare convergence of tropical cyclones and prolonged monsoon downpours, stand as one of the deadliest natural disasters in Asia's recent history. In Indonesia alone, the national disaster agency reported 502 fatalities, with 508 still missing amid the rubble of collapsed homes and bur-ied villages. Sri Lanka, battered by Cyclone Ditwah, tallied 355 deaths and 366 unaccounted for, marking its worst calamity since the 2004 tsunami. Thailand's southern provinces, particularly Songkhla, bore witness to 170 lives lost, while Malaysia and Vietnam added dozens more to the grim ledger. Over 4 million peo-ple—nearly 3 million in Thailand and 1.1 million in Indonesia—faced evacuation, their homes submerged under waters that rose eight feet in mere hours. Hat Yai, Thailand's commercial hub, recorded 335 millimeters of rain in a single day, a del-uge unseen in 300 years, turning streets into raging rivers and isolating maternity wards with newborns inside.

The human cost extends far beyond the immediate horror, weaving a tapestry of survival laced with grief. In Sri Lanka's central hills, where landslides buried entire villages, rescuers uncovered an endangered Sumatran elephant entangled in de-bris—a poignant symbol of nature's indiscriminate wrath.

Rising Monsoon Extremes: Why South and Southeast Asia Are Seeing Record-Breaking Floods

At the heart of this catastrophe lies a climate system pushed to its breaking point. The monsoon, long a life-giving rhythm for Asia's agrarian heartlands, has mor-phed into a weapon of destruction. Typically spanning June to September, the 2024-2025 season extended its fury into November, fueled by a rare tropical storm in the Malacca Strait and Cyclone Ditwah over the Bay of Bengal.

In Hat Yai, rainfall exceeded 300-year norms, while Colombo's Kelani River basin saw over-flows that submerged 148,000 homes. Scientists attribute this escalation to hu-man-caused climate breakdown: warming oceans, supercharged by trapped greenhouse gases, inject storms with unprecedented energy. For every degree Celsius of global warming, the atmosphere holds 7% more moisture, translating to heavier downpours and flash floods that overwhelm even the most resilient land-scapes.

South and Southeast Asia, home to over 2 billion people, sit at the epicenter of this transformation. The East Asian Summer Monsoon, driving peak rains from May to September, now collides with erratic patterns like La Niña, which cools Pa-cific waters and intensifies trade winds, drawing more moisture inland.

In 2025, this interplay birthed Cyclone Senyar—a "rare" formation in the strait—dumping over 100 millimeters in 24 hours across Sumatra, Aceh, and West Sumatra. The result: flash floods that buried villages under meters of mud, landslides that claimed hundreds, and river breaches that isolated entire provinces. Vietnam's central coast, lashed by Typhoon Kalmaegi, echoed the chaos with 66 deaths and widespread evacuations.

Data paints a stark picture. Global models from the Coupled Model Intercompari-son Project predict that by 2100, extreme rainfall events in the region could surge by 20-30%, with coastal cities like Bangkok and Yangon facing prolonged inunda-tion. In India, though spared the worst this cycle, upstream Himalayan glacial melts—accelerated by 2°C regional warming—feed the Brahmaputra and Ganges, priming future monsoons for overflow. The 2025 floods, claiming over 900 lives across four nations, underscore a vicious cycle: deforestation in Sumatra's peat-lands reduces soil absorption, urban sprawl in Colombo's outskirts chokes drain-age, and overfished oceans weaken natural barriers like mangroves. As one me-teorologist noted, "The monsoon isn't changing; it's us, through fossil fuels and land grabs, that's rewriting its script."

This isn't mere weather—it's a pattern etched in data. Since 2000, extreme flood events in Southeast Asia have doubled, per the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance.

Economic Shockwaves: How Regional Floods Are Disrupting Global Supply Chains

The floods' fury extends to the arteries of global commerce, severing supply chains that underpin economies from Silicon Valley to European factories. South-east Asia, a linchpin in electronics, textiles, and commodities, grinds to a halt as ports flood and factories shutter. In Thailand's Hat Yai, a key manufacturing node, submersion of industrial estates halts production of automotive parts and gar-ments, delaying exports worth millions daily. Indonesia's Sumatra, vital for palm oil and rubber, sees plantations underwater, spiking global prices for these essen-tials used in everything from biofuels to tires.

The ripple effects are seismic. Vietnam's central floods, damaging $1.2 billion in infrastructure, disrupt semiconductor flows, echoing 2021's chip shortages that idled car plants worldwide. Malaysia's Perlis inundations strand 4,000 tourists and clog northern trade routes, while Sri Lanka's Colombo port—handling 7 million containers yearly—faces backlogs from Kelani overflows. Commodity markets tremble: palm oil futures jump 15% as Sumatran yields plummet, inflating food and cosmetic costs globally. Rubber from flooded Thai estates tightens tire sup-plies, pressuring automakers amid EV transitions.

Geopolitical tensions compound the chaos. Proposed U.S. tariffs—10-20% base-line, 60% on China—exacerbate rerouting woes, with Red Sea disruptions already inflating freight by 300%. Cyber vulnerabilities in sub-tier suppliers, hit harder by outages, invite attacks, as seen in 2024's electronics hacks.

Everstream Analytics warns flooding tops 2025 risks, with U.S. claims from Hurricane Helene nearing $7 billion. In Asia, facility shutdowns in flood-prone hubs like Shenzhen's ports—suspended by Typhoon Ragasa—cascade delays, while inland wildfires in Califor-nia's logistics corridors mirror the strain.

Infrastructure on the Brink: How Floods Exposed Weaknesses in Asian Urban Planning

Urban jungles, built on floodplains, crumbled under the deluge, exposing decades of shortsighted planning. Colombo's drainage, clogged by unchecked sprawl, turned streets into canals, submerging 80% of low-lying homes. Hat Yai's outdat-ed culverts, overwhelmed by 335mm rains, isolated hospitals and markets, stranding 30 newborns in a flooded maternity ward. In Indonesia's Padang, col-lapsed bridges severed Sumatra's north-south lifeline, delaying aid to 28,400 in shelters.

River management failures amplify woes: the Kelani's unmaintained embank-ments breached, flooding Kaduwela's outskirts. Malaysia's Kemena River, shallow from silt buildup, spilled into Sarawak, displacing 7,397. Urban concretization—paving 30% more green space in Bangkok since 2000—hastens runoff, turning choes into torrents. Landslides in Sikkim's Teesta basin, triggered by deforested slopes, echo Himachal's cloudburst scars.

Lessons demand reform: sponge city models in China absorb 70% more rainwater via permeable pavements and wetlands. India's Surat integrates embankments with real-time monitoring, reducing breaches 50%. Yet, funding gaps persist—$23.6 billion needed for Thailand's 2025 resilience alone.

Migration and Displacement: Floods Forcing Communities to Move Across Borders

Floods don't just drown homes—they uproot lives, propelling a tide of climate refugees across porous borders. In 2025, over 4 million displaced in Southeast Asia join a swelling exodus, with 1.3 million in Sri Lanka alone fleeing Cyclone Dit-wah's wrath. Low-lying Colombo suburbs emptied as 148,000 sought higher ground, many crossing into Tamil Nadu, India, straining informal networks. Indo-nesia's 300,000 evacuees from Sumatra's landslides trek to urban peripheries, overwhelming Jakarta's slums.

Cross-border flows intensify humanitarian strains. Malaysian Perlis shelters 18,700, including Indonesian day-laborers fleeing flooded rubber estates, while Thailand's 2 million displaced include Myanmar migrants from upstream Mekong breaches. In Vietnam, 250,000 evacuated from central floods eye Cambodian borders, echoing 2011's 500,000 displacements. Poorer families migrate farthest, women and children facing heightened risks of trafficking and exploitation in transit camps.

Long-term, this signals a migration crisis: by 2050, 200 million climate migrants globally, per UN estimates, with Asia's deltas ground zero.

Agriculture Under Water: Impact of Asian Floods on Global Food Security

Fields once golden with rice now lie drowned, a grim tableau of climate's assault on Asia's breadbasket. The 2025 floods ravaged 200,000 hectares of crops in Vi-etnam alone, slashing rice yields by up to 4.3% globally—the staple for half the world's population. In Thailand's Mekong Delta, submergence destroys jasmine rice paddies, threatening exports that feed 500 million. Indonesia's Sumatra palm oil groves, submerged under meters of water, face fungal rot, potentially hiking global prices 20% and disrupting biodiesel chains.

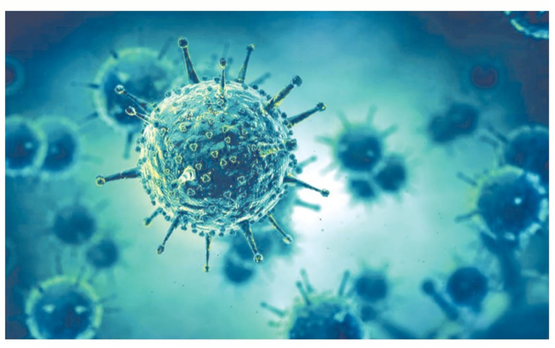
Rubber taps silent in flooded Malaysian estates signal tire shortages, while Sri Lanka's tea hills, buried in landslides, imperil the $1.3 billion industry that employs millions. Cassava and sugarcane in Vietnam's central belt, vital for animal feed and ethanol, rot in stagnant pools, exacerbating food inflation amid Ukraine's lingering grain curbs. The Mekong's saltwater intrusion, worsened by sea-level rise, saliniz-es delta soils, forcing farmers to abandon ancestral plots.

Global food security teeters. Asia produces 90% of the world's rice; a 18-million-ton annual loss from floods could spike prices 10-15%, hitting import-dependent Africa hardest. In India, though less flooded, upstream Brahmaputra overflows echo risks, with glacial melts priming mega-floods.

Global Responsibility: How International Action (or Inaction) Shapes Flood Re-covery Efforts

The world's indifference amplifies Asia's agony. COP29's $100 billion adaptation pledge lags, leaving $1.2 billion Vietnamese damages underfunded. U.S. tariffs disrupt reroutes, while China's Yarlung dam raises downstream fears. Yet, allianc-es forge paths: India's 12-tonne aid to Sri Lanka via Operation Sagar Bandhu aids 500,000.

Foreign aid—UK's PACT, AFD's AdaptAction—bolsters early warnings, but private innovation from Kenya's Ushahidi maps crises. Climate negotiations must priori-tize: tripling finance by 2035, as pledged. As global leaders convene, Asia's survi-vors implore: Inaction drowns us all; action lifts the tide.



Health After the Storm: Spread of Disease and the Strain on Medical Systems

As waters recede, a silent epidemic brews in the muck. Stagnant pools breed Ae-des mosquitoes, spiking dengue cases 200% post-flood in the Philippines. Lepto-spirosis, lurking in rodent-tainted floods, claims dozens in Sri Lanka's urban fringes, its fever-mimicking symptoms overwhelming clinics. In Thailand's south, chol-era surges from contaminated wells, while Vietnam's central deluge fosters meli-oidosis outbreaks.

Medical systems buckle: Indonesia's Aceh hospitals, flooded and understaffed, tri-age 58 injured amid power blackouts. Sri Lanka's 1.1 million affected strain Co-lombo's wards, with 191 missing complicating contact tracing. Co-infections—dengue-leptospirosis—complicate diagnoses, per regional health bulletins. Mar-ginalized groups—migrants in Malaysia's shelters—face barriers to care, amplify-ing transmission.

Maradona's Ex-Trainer Says LIONEL Messi Must 'Prioritise' 2026 WC

Ex-Maradona trainer urges Lionel Messi to leave MLS temporarily for World Cup readiness

BUENOS AIRES

Lionel Messi may be enjoying a stellar run with Inter Miami, but Fernando Signorini — Diego Maradona's former trainer — believes the Argentine captain must rethink his plans ahead of the 2026 FIFA World Cup. Signorini has urged Messi to "prioritise the World Cup" and consider stepping away temporarily from Major League Soccer, which he described as "a parody of football."

Messi recently helped Inter Miami crush New York City FC 5-1 in the Eastern Conference Final, providing an assist and guiding his team into the MLS Cup 2025. The 38-year-old also surpassed Ferenc Puskas for the most career assists in football history, reaching an extraordinary tally of 405.

However, Signorini warned that the MLS calendar — which offers fewer competitive matches leading into the World Cup — could leave Messi underprepared compared to players competing in Europe. Speaking to Super Deportivo Radio, he said, "Leo needs to prioritise the World Cup. He's caught up in this infernal record-breaking machine that I don't know the point of, because what he's doing now isn't football — it's a parody of football."

The veteran trainer suggested that Messi should take a break with his family and consider a short-term loan to a more competitive environment ahead of football's biggest tournament.

Messi, meanwhile, has maintained that his participation in the 2026 World Cup will depend on his physical condition. Speaking to SPORT, he said he does not want to be a "burden" and must "feel physically fit" before committing to Argentina's campaign. The MLS schedule, with a pre-season period and fewer matches before the tournament, will require him to assess his readiness "day by day."

Still, Messi admitted that the World Cup holds unmatched significance. "It's special… the biggest competition there is," he said. "I'm excited, but taking it one day at a time."

Mbappe Scores, but Madrid Slip as Barca Gain Edge

GIRONA

Real Madrid's title charge suffered another setback as they were held to a 1-1 draw by Girona, marking their third straight La Liga stalemate and allowing Barcelona to stay atop the table. Azzedine Ounahi struck just before half-time to give the hosts a surprise lead, before Kylian Mbappe levelled from the penalty spot to salvage a point for Madrid.

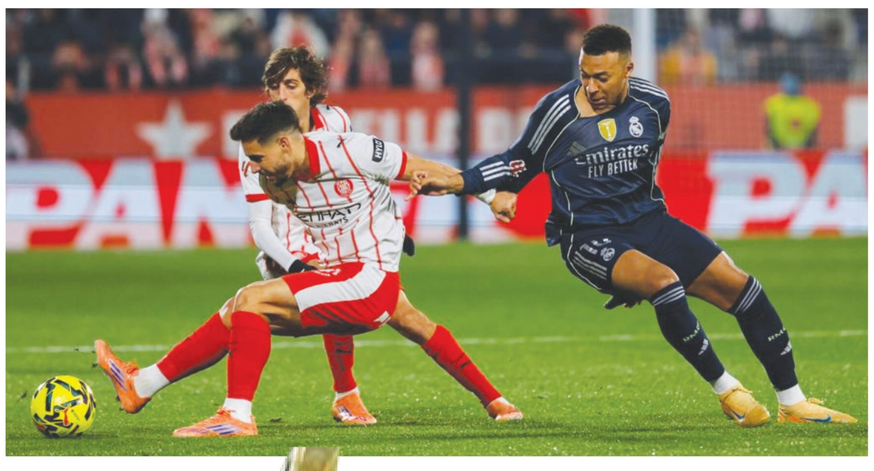
Real Madrid held by Girona as Barcelona gain crucial advantage in La Liga race

The draw came just hours after Barcelona defeated Alaves to move into first place. Madrid needed a win to reclaim the summit but now trail the reigning champions by one point. The result also intensifies pressure on coach Xabi Alonso, whose future has been the subject of growing speculation. "We are up there, it's all very even… we have to continue with the unity we have," Alonso said after the match.

Madrid travel next to Athletic Bilbao on Wednesday for a fourth consecutive away league fixture, a scheduling adjustment due to their participation in January's Spanish Super Cup.

The match itself was tense and scrappy, with both sides missing early chances. Mbappe had a goal disallowed for handball before Ounahi stunned Madrid with a crisp strike from the edge of the box. Girona, 18th and fighting relegation, pushed aggressively and nearly extended their lead, forcing a superb save from Thibaut Courtois. Madrid slowly regained momentum, and after Vinicius Jr. had a goal ruled out for offside, the Brazilian won a penalty when he was fouled by Hugo Rincon. Mbappe converted emphatically for his 14th league goal of the campaign. "Absolutely not the result we wanted… we need to change this dynamic," Mbappe wrote on Instagram.

Elsewhere, Villarreal stayed in the title hunt after Alberto Moleiro's stoppage-time winner sealed a dramatic 3-2 victory over Real Sociedad, while Real Betis defeated Sevilla 2-0 in a heated derby interrupted by crowd trouble.



M Chinnaswamy Stadium's IPL future hinges on government-mandated structural fitness clearance

Stadium Safety Review Puts IPL 2026 Matches at Chinnaswamy in Doubt

BENGALURU

The future of Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 matches at Bengaluru's M. Chinnaswamy Stadium has become uncertain after the Karnataka government ordered a comprehensive structural safety clearance before granting permission to host games. The directive follows the fatal stampede earlier this year that killed 11 people and injured nearly 50 during a celebratory event for Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB).

The Public Works Department (PWD) has formally instructed the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) to submit a detailed structural fitness report prepared by experts accredited by the National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL). The government has stated that only after independent specialists verify the stadium's ability to safely accommodate large crowds will it consider allowing IPL fixtures in 2026.

Built on 17 acres of PWD-leased land in central Bengaluru, the Chinnaswamy Stadium has already faced significant repercussions following the June tragedy. The venue has not hosted a single match since the incident, and a subsequent inquiry led by Justice John Michael D'Cunha declared the stadium fundamentally unsafe for large gatherings. The commission's report warned of "unacceptable risks" related to crowd management, emergency response and traffic flow, concluding that the stadium was unfit for high-attendance events.

The fallout extended beyond the IPL. The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) revoked Bengaluru's hosting rights for the Women's ODI World Cup, shifting matches — including the final — to Navi Mumbai's DY Patil Stadium. The city was also excluded from the match list for the Men's T20 World Cup scheduled for February–March 2026.

For Royal Challengers Bengaluru, whose identity is deeply tied to the Chinnaswamy, the ruling casts fresh uncertainty. Long regarded as one of India's most vibrant cricketing venues, its return to IPL action will now depend entirely on passing stringent safety evaluations mandated by the state government.

Coca-Cola Partners with HI to Boost Jr Women's WC Preparations

NEW DELHI

Coca-Cola India, through its Anandana Foundation and the #SheTheDifference initiative, has strengthened its partnership with Hockey India to support the junior women's squad preparing for the 2025 FIH Women's Junior Hockey World Cup in Santiago, Chile.

The collaboration, now in its third year, focuses on providing international exposure, specialised coaching and holistic development programmes aimed at enhancing the readiness of emerging players. The support has included multiple high-performance camps in India, Amsterdam and Berlin, along with a rigorous five-match exposure tour to Australia where the squad gained valuable experience against top-tier opponents.

Anandana's backing also covers training equipment, performance tools, international travel and accommodation, and athlete welfare programmes — all designed to build technical depth, confidence and match temperament among young players.

SHANE WATSON on Legends Pro T20 League: "It Feels Like the IPL for Legends"

GOA

Australian cricketing icon Shane Watson is savouring his return to competitive cricket in the Legends Pro T20 League, describing it as "the IPL for legends" while appreciating its relaxed, sun-soaked vibe. Speaking ahead of his appearance, Watson said, "Once that spark is in you, it's hard for it to disappear. I still enjoy hitting the ball cleanly, I still want to test myself, and this league gives me the space to do all of that while actually having fun again."

One of the highlights for Watson is sharing the field with familiar faces from his career. "Being out there with guys like Harbhajan, Shikhar and Dale brings back a lot of memories," he said. "We've played against each other, spent time in the same dressing rooms, and travelled across the world together. Now we get to enjoy all of that without the intensity of points tables or titles. It's a different kind of special."

Watson also praised Goa as the ideal venue, noting its laid-back charm. "It reminds me of growing up in Australia, hitting balls on the beach, mates around you, and waves in the background. That carefree spirit really fits a league like this," he added.

For Watson, the league is more than a fun outing—it celebrates an era of cricket and its supporters. "This genuinely feels like the IPL for legends, big names, enthusiastic crowds and real cricket being played. The fans who watched us through our careers still turn up with incredible energy. The competitiveness is still there, and it's a nice way to honour what this whole generation brought to the sport," he said.

Looking ahead, Watson is optimistic the tournament will captivate fans.

LUCAS PAQUETA SLAMS FA FOR LACK OF SUPPORT AFTER RED CARD

NEW DELHI

West Ham United midfielder Lucas Paqueta publicly criticised the Football Association (FA) following his red card in the club's 2-0 defeat to Liverpool, saying the governing body failed to provide psychological support during a two-year spot-fixing investigation. Paqueta, recently cleared of all allegations, linked his on-pitch behaviour to the mental strain caused by the prolonged probe.

The Brazilian was sent off late in the match at London Stadium after receiving two yellow cards for dissent in quick succession. The incident drew widespread attention, media reports describing it as "ridiculous behaviour." Paqueta took to X (formerly Twitter) to explain that the FA's lack of support during the investigation had affected his mental health, which may have contributed to his conduct on the pitch.

"It's ridiculous to have your life and career affected for two years without any psychological support from the federation," Paqueta wrote. He added, "Perhaps this ridiculous behaviour is just a reflection of everything I've had to endure. I'm sorry if I'm not perfect."

Despite his criticism, Paqueta apologised for his actions in the match, stating, "This does not justify my expulsion and for that I apologise to the fans and my teammates!" West Ham coach Nuno Espirito Santo confirmed he will hold a private discussion with Paqueta to understand his reaction.

Paqueta was cleared on July 31 of four spot-fixing charges related to allegedly seeking bookings in matches against Leicester City, Aston Villa, Leeds United, and Bournemouth. The investigation spanned two years, during which he faced the possibility of a lifetime ban.

Praggnanandhaa Continues Golden Run at London Chess Classic Open

LONDON

Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa continued his impressive form at the London Chess Classic Open 2025, emerging as co-leader alongside Velimir Ivic with 5/6 points after six rounds. Praggnanandhaa drew his game against Hungary's GM Tamas Fodos Jr. in 21 moves before bouncing back to defeat IM Eytan Rozen of Israel, reclaiming a top spot on the leaderboard. The two co-leaders are set to face each other in the seventh round, which could prove decisive for the tournament's outcome.

Despite a slight rating loss, Praggnanandhaa maintained his position at World No. 7 in the December 2025 FIDE Rating list. Meanwhile, fellow Indian Arjun Erigaisi climbed to World No. 5 after gaining 6.4 Elo points at the FIDE World Cup 2025. World Champion D Gukesh slipped to World No. 10 following his early exit in the third round. Currently, only five Indian players feature among the global Top 30, highlighting the competitive challenges at the elite level.

Among Indian women, GM Humpy Koneru moved up to World No. 5 despite not playing any rated games in November, while GM Divya Deshmukh dropped to No. 12. IM Padmini Rout and IM Savitha Shri B remain the only two Indian women in the top ten to gain Elo points recently.

November proved difficult for many Indian players at the FIDE World Cup 2025. Arjun Erigaisi's strong form ended in a quarterfinal tiebreak loss to China's GM Wei Yi, while Pentala Harikrishna delivered a career-best performance before bowing out to GM Jose Eduardo Martinez Alcantara of Mexico.

Praggnanandhaa's continued success at the London Chess Classic reinforces his standing among the world's elite, underlining India's growing influence in global chess competitions.

Kohli's Future 'Not a Question', Says Kotak after India Win

BATTING COACH SITANSHU KOTAK DISMISSES SPECULATION ON VIRAT KOHLI'S ODI FUTURE FIRMLY

RANCHI

India batting coach Sitanshu Kotak brushed aside chatter around Virat Kohli's long-term ODI future, insisting the star batter remains central to the team's plans after his match-winning century in the first ODI against South Africa. India clinched a tense 17-run victory on Sunday, with Kohli producing his 52nd ODI hundred to set up the win. Kotak expressed frustration at the renewed debate over whether senior players such as Kohli and Rohit Sharma would feature in the 2027 ODI World Cup. He stressed that neither the squad nor the team management was thinking that far ahead. "I really don't know why we need to look at all this," he said. "He's batting so well. The way he's performing and the way his fitness is — there are no questions."

He emphasised that experience, clarity of roles and real-time learning matter far more than distant projections, underscoring Kohli's continued value. "He's just brilliant. As long as he keeps batting like this, there is no point talking about anything else," Kotak added.

Kohli's innings, built on responsibility and composure, once again underlined his stature in the format. Kotak confirmed that the minor back discomfort Kohli showed during the knock was nothing serious.

Kotak also highlighted the impact of having both Rohit and Kohli back in the XI after the Test series loss, saying their presence naturally lifts the dressing room. He noted that heavy dew made bowling extremely difficult in the second innings, explaining South Africa's surge in the chase.

He credited Harshit Rana's early strikes for tilting the game India's way in challenging conditions. "With a Kookaburra, swing lasts just 2–5 overs. He made it count," Kotak said.

Mental Strength Matters More Than Over-Preparation, Says Virat Kohli

RANCHI

Virat Kohli underlined the value of mental clarity over excessive practice after producing a commanding 135 in India's series-opening ODI win against South Africa. His 52nd ODI hundred not only anchored India's innings but also reaffirmed his relevance in the format he now exclusively plays, despite limited match time in recent months.

Kohli's century came amid discussions within the national selection committee about whether he should feature in the upcoming Vijay Hazare Trophy to sharpen his rhythm. Instead, the veteran batter responded in trademark fashion — with fluency, intensity and supreme awareness at the crease. "I have never been a believer of a lot of preparation. All my cricket has been mental," he said after the match. "As long as my fitness levels are up and I am feeling well, it's good." With more than 300 ODIs behind him, Kohli said experience helps him understand how much training he truly requires. "If you're in touch with the game and able to hit balls in practice, if you bat for an hour or two in the nets, you know you're good.

Kohli's Commitment Shines at 38, Says Dale Steyn

RANCHI

At 38, an age when many cricketers prefer to slow down, Virat Kohli's unwavering dedication to the sport continues to draw admiration. Former South Africa pacer Dale Steyn recently lauded Kohli's relentless commitment after the star batter hammered his 52nd ODI century against South Africa, showing that stepping away from T20Is and Tests has not affected his dominance in the ODI arena.

Steyn highlighted Kohli's exceptional mental fortitude, pointing out how his intent is visible in every aspect of his game—his energetic running between the wickets, sharp fielding efforts, and fearless dives. With more than 300 ODIs to his name, Kohli leans on vast experience and a strong belief in his well-honed methods. Steyn further noted that Kohli's focus, visualization techniques, and disciplined preparation keep him among the world's finest even as he moves deeper into his career. Kohli himself underlined the importance of mental readiness, saying that an hour or two of solid net practice is enough to assure him of his rhythm. At 38, his passion, fitness, and clarity of mind continue to power performances at the highest level.

Gaikwad at No. 4 Highlights India's Growing Selection Dilemma

MUMBAI

Ruturaj Gaikwad's unexpected move to No. 4 in Ranchi has opened a fresh chapter in India's evolving white-ball transition — one that reflects both opportunity and confusion within the current selection framework. The 28-year-old, known for his exceptional List A record and long-standing success as an opener, found himself in untested territory on Sunday, stepping into a role he has almost never played in his domestic career.

Gaikwad's shift was triggered by a vacancy created by Shreyas Iyer's injury, yet his selection for the spot was never publicly communicated. Officially, Tilak Varma, Rishabh Pant and Dhruv Jurel were listed as contenders. Gaikwad, picked as a reserve opener, wasn't expected to feature at all had captain Shubman Gill recovered from a neck spasm in time. Instead, he walked out at No. 4 — in MS Dhoni's backyard — symbolising a broader trend under head coach Gautam Gambhir: experimentation without continuity.

Recent series have been marked by frequent role shuffles, leaving players unsure of their standing. In the home Test defeat to South Africa, multiple batters rotated through No. 3. B. Sai Sudharsan — fresh off a career-best performance — was dropped for the first Test, only to return once the series slipped away. This inconsistency has begun affecting performance and eroding player confidence.

Jordan–NASCAR Showdown Reaches Court

CHARLOTTE

Michael Jordan's high-stakes legal fight against NASCAR moved into federal court on Monday, opening a jury trial that could dramatically alter the structure and governance of top-tier American stock-car racing. Jordan-owned 23XI Racing and Front Row Motorsports have accused NASCAR of operating as a monopoly, alleging anticompetitive control over charters, race tracks, regulations and revenue distribution.

The dispute began when the two teams refused to sign new charter agreements in late 2024, arguing the terms failed to address long-standing demands for permanent charters, a larger share of revenues and a meaningful voice in decision-making. NASCAR, founded 76 years ago by the France family, insists it has violated no antitrust laws and maintains that increased payouts in the 2025 agreement demonstrate fairness.

Pretrial discovery exposed damaging internal communication on both sides — from NASCAR executives mocking team owners and fans, to 23XI representatives expressing contempt for the France family.

ITALIAN TENNIS LEGEND PIETRANGELI DIES AT 92

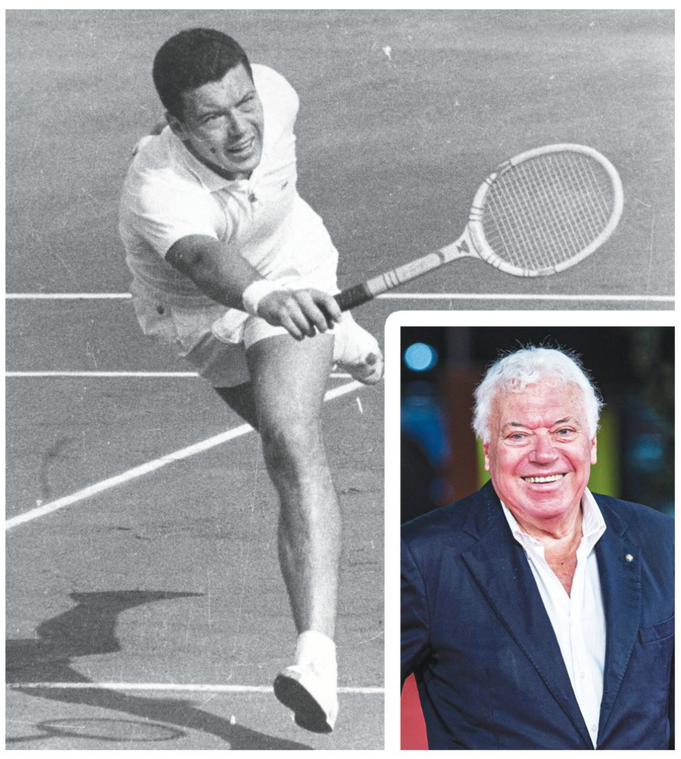
MILAN

Nicola Pietrangeli, one of Italy's greatest tennis pioneers and a two-time French Open champion, passed away on Monday at the age of 92, the Italian Tennis Federation (FITP) announced. Widely regarded as the country's finest player before the rise of Jannik Sinner, Pietrangeli remains the only Italian inducted into the World Tennis Hall of Fame.

Born in Tunis in 1933 to an Italian father and Russian mother, Pietrangeli became a trailblazer for Italian tennis through a career defined by elegance, athleticism and remarkable longevity. He captured 44 singles titles in total, headlined by his back-to-back Roland Garros triumphs in 1959 and 1960. He also finished runner-up in Paris twice, losing to Manuel Santana in 1961 and 1964, and reached the Wimbledon final in 1960, the same year as his second French Open crown.

Tributes poured in from across the tennis world. The Italian Open organisers, recalling a champion who won their event twice, said: "It is with deep sadness that we say goodbye to Nicola Pietrangeli, a true legend of Italian tennis... Ciao, Nicola."

Pietrangeli's legacy extended beyond his individual achievements. A cornerstone of Italy's Davis Cup history, he contested 164 matches for the national team and later captained Italy to its first Davis Cup title in 1976, further cementing his place as a foundational figure in the sport's growth in the country.



For decades, Pietrangeli stood as the benchmark of Italian tennis excellence—an emblem of the sport's early global expansion and a figure whose grace and achievements inspired generations. His death marks the end of an era for Italian and world tennis.

Resort Owner Rebuts Nepomniachtchi's Criticism after Chess WC Exit

GOA

A day after Russian Grandmaster Ian Nepomniachtchi lashed out at the organisers of the Chess World Cup 2025 in Goa, the owner of Resort Rio — the official players' hotel — has strongly refuted his claims, calling the criticism "emotional" and "unexpected." Nepomniachtchi, who crashed out in the second round after losing to India's Diptayan Ghosh, left the playing hall immediately and checked out of his hotel within an hour. He later slammed the venue as "sub-standard," citing poor rooms, food and service, as well as humidity, mosquitoes and jet lag, as factors behind his early elimination.

His remarks triggered a sharp response from Resort Rio owner Anup Shah, who told that he was "surprised" by the outburst. "People should not be commenting on things like this. Not Grandmasters reacting emotionally. Chess players are supposed to be rational, logical thinkers, and here we have people who complain about humidity," he said, adding that Goa's tropical conditions were hardly unexpected. "It's like going to Siberia and complaining about the cold."

Shah disputed Nepomniachtchi's claim of receiving only pineapples as part of his meals, insisting that the buffet offered a diverse menu designed for players from multiple countries. "We can't just please the Russians or the Iranians or the Turks. We have to create a menu that suits everyone," he said.

He also defended the nutritional value of the food provided. "Nepo talking about not getting calories through pineapples — I can prove him wrong.

Verstappen Keeps Title Fight Alive With Qatar GP Win

QATAR

Max Verstappen reignited the Formula 1 championship battle by winning the Qatar Grand Prix, ensuring that the title will be decided at next weekend's season finale in Abu Dhabi. The Red Bull driver, chasing a fifth consecutive world championship, held off McLaren's Oscar Piastri to claim his 70th career victory.

Championship leader Lando Norris, who would have secured his maiden F1 crown with a win in Lusail, finished fourth after a challenging evening that saw him lose crucial ground to both rivals. Piastri crossed the line second, keeping his title hopes alive despite slipping to third in the standings.

The trio has dominated the season with seven wins each, setting up one of the tightest championship showdowns in recent F1 history. Verstappen, who started the weekend 24 points behind Norris, capitalised on a strong performance and now sits just 12 points off the top. Piastri, meanwhile, trails Norris by 16 points heading into Abu Dhabi.

Verstappen was calm but jubilant on team radio after taking the chequered flag. "That's a very lovely race," he said. "Great job everyone."

Norris still has the chance to become the first British world champion since Lewis Hamilton secured his seventh title in 2020. However, the momentum has shifted, and the McLaren driver will need a decisive performance in the final round to hold off his challengers.

A visibly frustrated Piastri summed up the high-pressure moment with a short, pained reaction: "Speechless. I don't know any words."

With just one race left, the stage is set for a dramatic conclusion to a fiercely contested season.

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